UJ ウルトラ YJC

皇国の守護者 弐

原作 佐藤大輔
漫画 伊藤悠

迫る〈帝国〉軍四万の軍勢——
祖国の命運を賭けた伏撃作戦の幕が上がる!

小さな島国〈皇国〉を突如襲った巨大国家〈帝国〉の軍勢。〈皇国〉の最北端・北領に上陸した〈帝国〉軍は、本土への上陸を目指し、洪水のように押し寄せてくる…! 増援を得て、四万に膨れ上がった軍勢を足止めすべく、新城を含む第十一大隊・八百名は伏撃作戦を展開する その結末は如何か…絶滅か——?

★NOVELS ファンタジア [皇国の守護者] ①〜⑨
佐藤大輔・著 既刊好評発売中!
中央公論新社 http://www.chuko.co.jp/

9784088768618
1929979005900
ISBN4-08-876861-2
C9979 ¥590E
定価 本体590円+税
雑誌 44255−61

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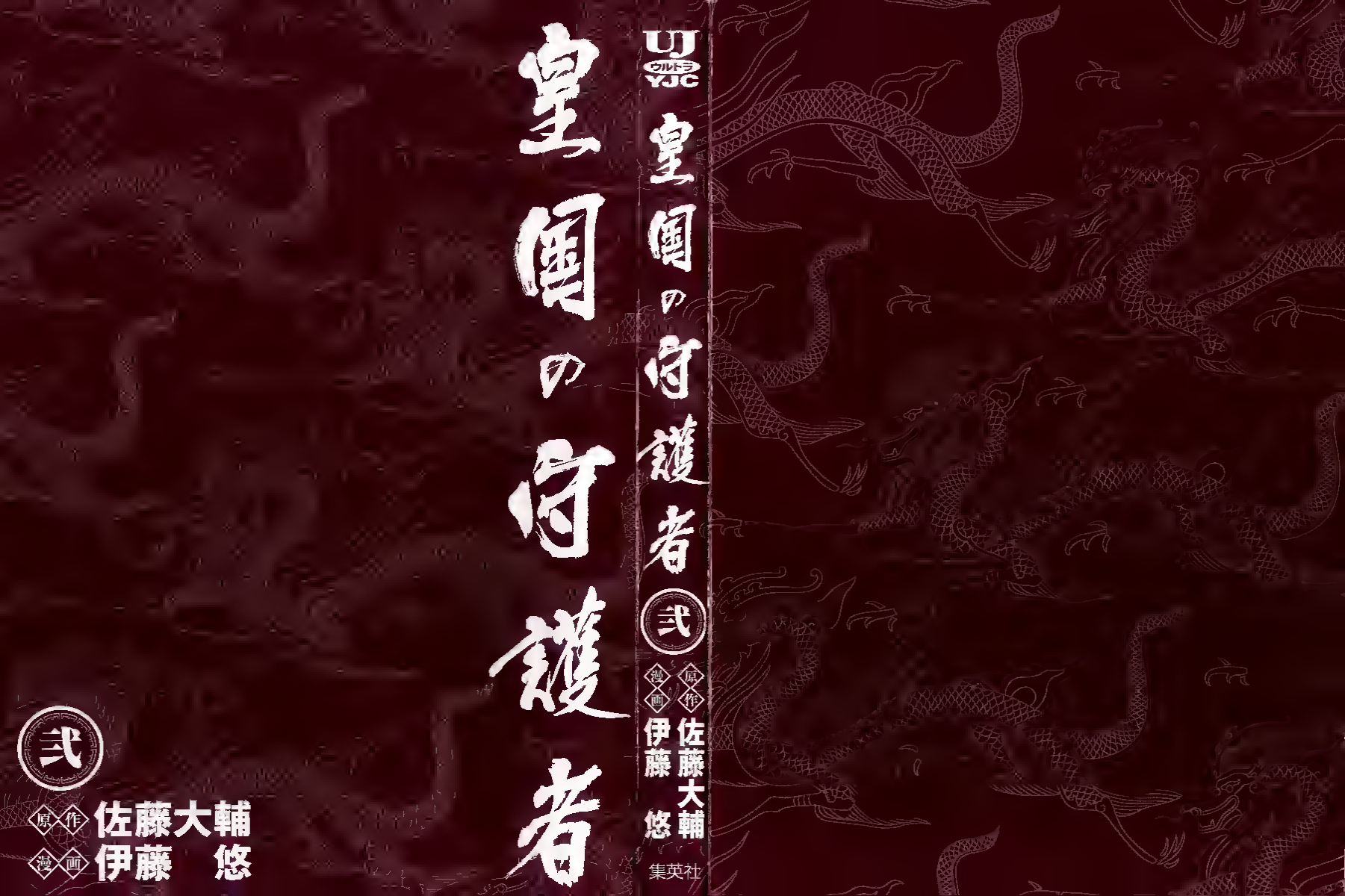
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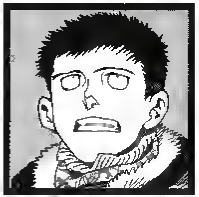
登場人物紹介

◆皇国軍◆

漆原少尉
第二中隊 第一小隊長を務める。

猪口曹長
熟練の曹長。新城の参謀的な存在。

千早（剣牙虎）
新城が世話をしている優秀な剣牙虎。



新城直衛中尉
本編の主人公。第二中隊所属。剣牙虎の扱いに精通。

金森二等導術兵
導術分隊所属。特殊能力者索敵などを行う。

妹尾少尉
第三中隊所属。隊全滅により第二中隊に合流。

兵藤少尉
第二中隊所属の尖兵小隊長。

坪田中佐
水軍所属。笹嶋の同僚。遠洋艦「大瀑」艦長。

笹嶋中佐
水軍所属。転進支援隊本部指令。

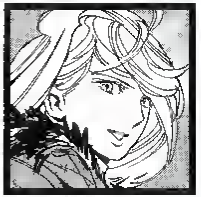
伊藤少佐
独立捜索剣虎兵 第十一大隊の隊長。

◆帝国軍◆

バルクホルン
〈帝国〉陸軍の大尉。兵からの信頼が厚い。

メレンティン
〈帝国〉東方辺境鎮定属作戦参謀。

カミンスキィ
〈帝国〉陸属の若き大佐。ユーリアの愛人。



ユーリア
〈帝国〉陸属の元帥。〈皇国〉侵略の総司令官。

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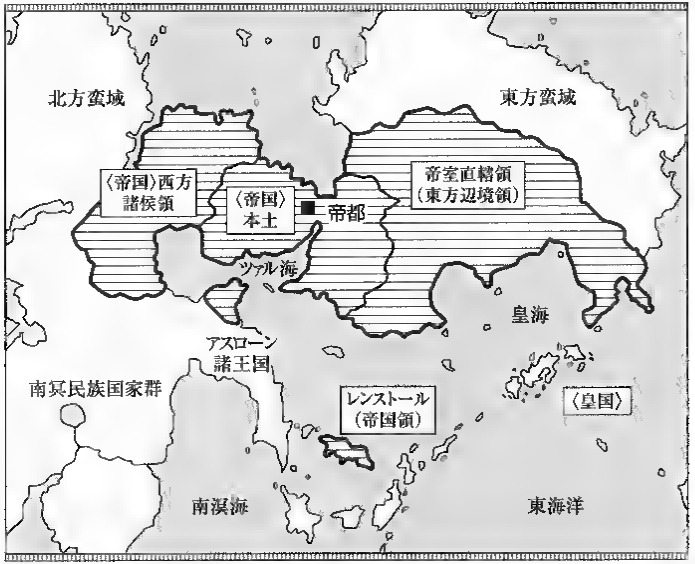
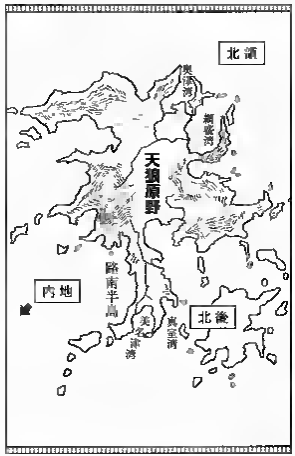
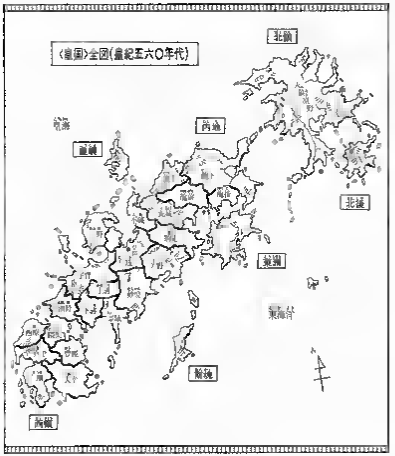






神代の昔、人と龍の間に結ばれたとされる〈大協約〉が世界秩序の根幹を成す〈大協約〉世界――。最大の大陸ツァルラントに興った侵略王朝はいくつもの内陸国家や諸部族を併呑し、超大国〈帝国〉としてわずかに残る諸勢力をも蹂躙していた。ツァルラント東端より海洋によって隔てられた洋上に存在する新興国〈皇国〉。北領・内地・東洲・皇峡・南境・西領の六つの大島からなるこの島国は、東方の周辺部族――〈帝国〉人の言う、蛮族――のひとつ。〈帝国〉の勢威を脅かすには至らないと見なされ、東洲公による内乱を最後に二十四年間大規模な戦役を経ることもなく平和の中にあった。

前巻までのあらすじ

だが、超大国〈帝国〉が宣戦布告もなしに〈皇国〉の最北端・北領に突如来襲し、侵攻を開始。北領の最前線を守る北領鎮台二万の軍勢は守原大将指揮の下、天狼原野で〈帝国〉軍を迎え撃つ。しかし、〈帝国〉が誇る戦姫・ユーリアの指揮する軍勢に撃破され、後方待機していた新城直衛中尉属する第二中隊も撤退を開始。撤退しながらの戦闘の中、中隊の戦線離脱援護に向かった鎧友・西田少尉を失ってしまう。何とか大隊に合流するも、偵察任務の中で中隊長、若菜大尉も戦死し、新城は第二中隊長に。絶望的な戦況の中、〈皇国〉軍は北領からの撤退を決定。最後衛の新城たちは転進支援にあたるが――!?

I REMEMBER I WAS RUNNING...
THAT ROAD CONTINUED ON TOWARDS MY VILLAGE...
I SAW IT BETWEEN HER FINGERS...
DON'T LOOK!

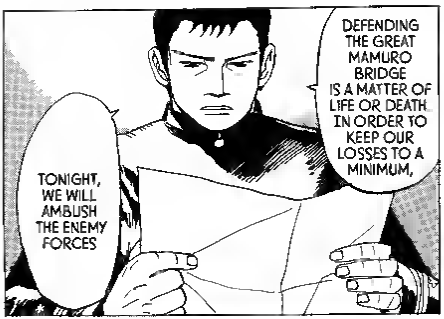
YOUR NAME... WHAT IS IT?
24 years ago, Toushuu...
第一章
剣虎兵(サーベルタイガース) 7

DID YOUR MOTHER DIE, TOO?
IT'S OKAY
IT'S OKAY NOW, SINCE I'M HERE WITH YOU
COME WITH ME

YOUR SABER-TOOTH TIGER CAN COME TOO
I SWEAR IT

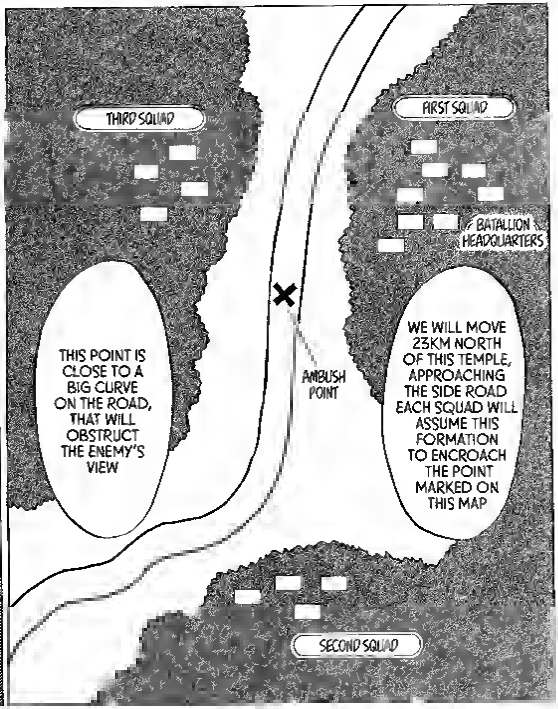
ARE YOU OKAY?
IF YOU ARE EXHAUSTED, YOU CAN'T GO TO ANOTHER BATTLE
I BET HE INHERITED THAT FROM HIS MOTHER,
IT'S TIME, LET'S GO
EVERYONE SIT DOWN
THAT'S RIGHT... FINALLY SIT DOWN AND RELAX A BIT
AH...

I'M SURE CHIHAYA IS WORRIED ABOUT YOU
YES
SO THAT'S HOW IT LOOKS TO YOU?
HE'S A KIND CAT

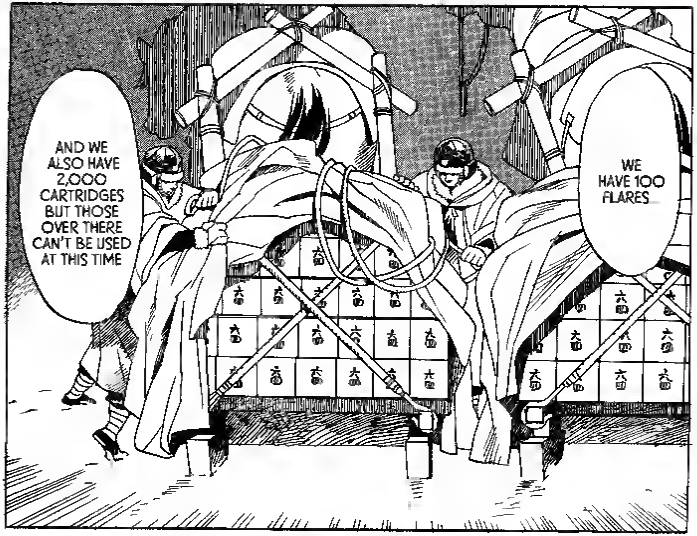

DEFENDING THE GREAT MAMURO BRIDGE IS A MATTER OF LIFE OR DEATH. IN ORDER TO KEEP OUR LOSSES TO A MINIMUM,
TONIGHT, WE WILL AMBUSH THE ENEMY FORCES

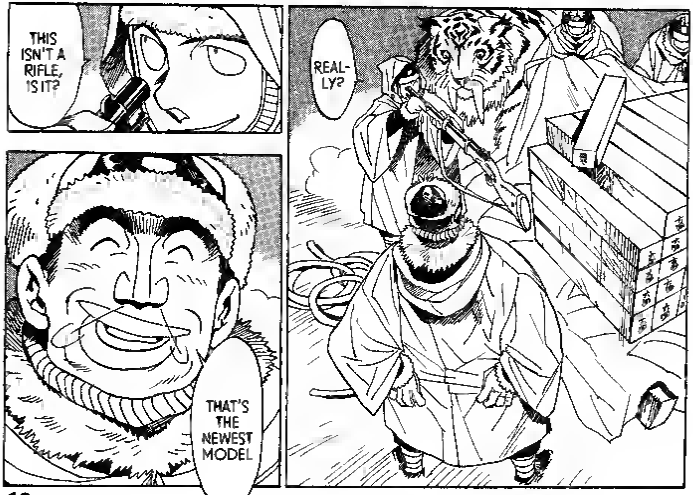
GIVE US FURTHER DETAILS, SERVICE OFFICER
YES

THE SECOND SQUAD WILL BE RIGHT IN FRONT OF THE ENEMY!


THIRD SQUAD
FIRST SQUAD
BATALLION HEADQUARTERS
THIS POINT IS CLOSE TO A BIG CURVE ON THE ROAD, THAT WILL OBSTRUCT THE ENEMY'S VIEW
AMBUSH POINT
WE WILL MOVE 23KM NORTH OF THIS TEMPLE, APPROACHING THE SIDE ROAD EACH SQUAD WILL ASSUME THIS FORMATION TO ENCROACH THE POINT MARKED ON THIS MAP
SECOND SQUAD

ACCORDING TO INFORMATION OBTAINED BY THE SECOND SQUAD, REINFORCEMENTS FROM THE ENEMY VANGUARD ARE APPROACHING US
I DON'T EVEN NEED TO BE HERE
STARTING TOMORROW, WE WON'T BE ABLE TO AVOID FIGHTING AT LEAST ONE ENEMY REGIMENT,
WE NEED TO MAINTAIN CONTROL OF THE BRIDGE FOR AT LEAST TWO FULL DAYS WE CANNOT RETREAT
THEREFORE, ONLY THOSE WHO SURVIVE WILL BE ABLE TO RETURN HOME


WE HAVE 100 FLARES
AND WE ALSO HAVE 2,000 CARTRIDGES BUT THOSE OVER THERE CAN'T BE USED AT THIS TIME


THIS ISN'T A RIFLE, IS IT?
REAL-LY?
THAT'S THE NEWEST MODEL

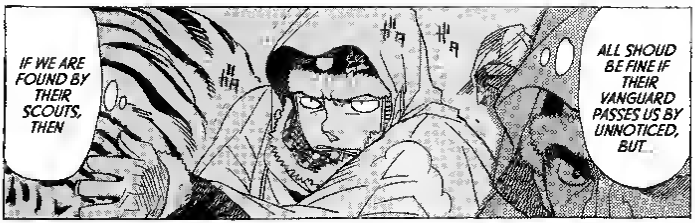
AM I OVERTHIKING THIS? I CAN'T HELP THINKING TOO MUCH
IF SOMETHING IS TO HAPPEN, IT WILL HAPPEN
ALSO, HOW DO WE PLAN TO RETREAT?
IF THE OPERATION IS SUSPENDED, WHAT SHOULD WE DO?
THE SITTUATION THUS FAR IS QUITE URGENT. THEY PROBABLY WON'T RECKLESSLY SUSPEND THIS OPERATION
IF THERE ARE NO QUESTIONS, THIS MEETING IS OVER.
WE WILL SORTIE ON THE FIRST HOUR OF THE MORNING

SERGEANT MAJOR DISTRIBUTE THOSE TO OUR SQUAD AS YOU SEE FIT
AH
GIVE PRIORITY TO THOSE SOLDIERS THAT ARE USED TO BEING IN THE VANGUARD
YES
BUT PRO-BABLY
HEY, THIS GUN IS HEAVY!!
HOW CAN I RUN CARRYING THIS THING?!
YES, LIEUTENANT
IT DOESN'T MATTER IF THEY COMPLAIN OR DISLIKE THIS JUST TELL THEM IT'S MY ORDER

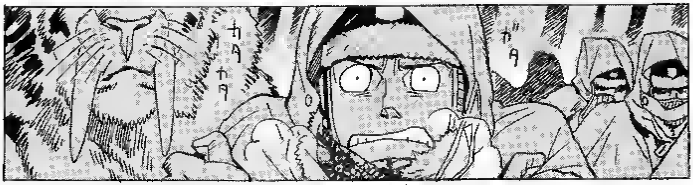
THIS GIVES US AN OVER-WHELMING ADVAN-TAGE OVER OUR ENEMIES
WELL, DUE TO THE CHANGES IT'S 30% HEAVIER, BUT...
SMOOTH INTERIOR
ROTATION
WHEN WE INCREASE THE DISTANCE, THE BULLET STRAYS OFF IT'S INTENDED ROUTE
REGULAR RIFLES ARE ONLY EFFECTIVE FOR ABOUT 91 METERS THIS MODEL HAS DOUBLE THE RANGE
GUN RIFLING (SPIRAL INTERIOR)
THE EXPLOSIVE POWER IS AMPLIFIED
AND DUE TO THE SPINNING, THE TRAJECTORY IS MAINTAINED
SINCE THIS SHOULD BE COSTLY TO PRODUCE, IT WILL ONLY BE GIVEN TO SPECIALIZED TROOPS
NOT EVEN THAT. WE PROBABLY DON'T EVEN HAVE ENOUGH TO PROVIDE FOR THESE TROOPS

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HARD WORK
NO UNUSUAL MOVIMENTS DETECTED

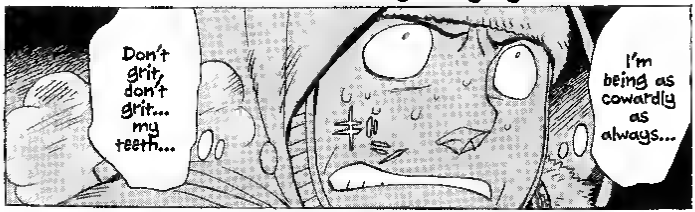
ALL ACCOR-DING TO PLAN
3AM: Ambush Point
Current temperature is 12 degrees Celsius, with a soft, yet painfulbreeze blowing

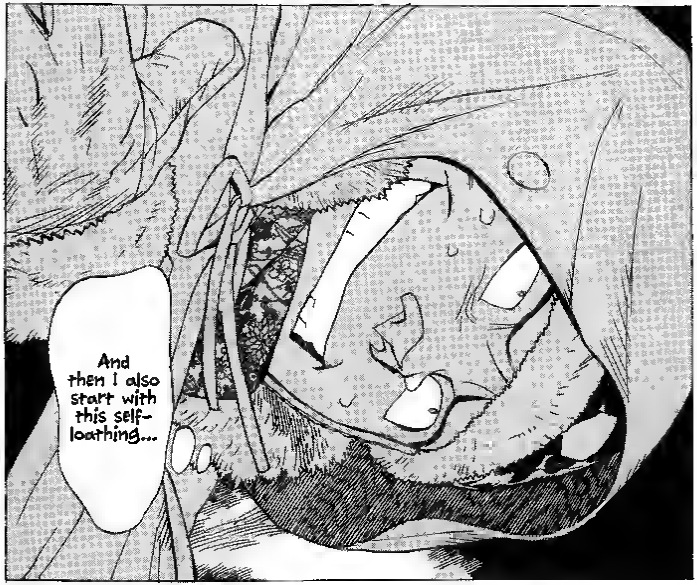

IF WE ARE FOUND BY THEIR SCOUTS, THEN
ALL SHOULD BE FINE IF THEIR VANGUARD PASSES US BY UNNOTICED, BUT...

YES...
COMPANY COM-MANDER
ACCORDING TO THE BATALLION COMMANDER, FROM NOW ONWARDS, I WILL BE THE COMMANDER OF THE SECOND COMPANY



I have no reason to grit my teeth,
but I seem to be doing it anyway





IF THE ENEMY COM-MANDER IS CAUTIOUS
THEIR VANGUARD COULD BE CLOSER TO THE MAIN FORCES THAN USUAL
ALSO, THEY ARE JUST A NIGHT MARCH,
AND I WONDER IF WE WOULD HAVE ENOUGH POWER TO FIGHT
THE SCOUTS WILL JOIN IN THE BATTLE...
FOR THAT REASON, THEY COULD BE MARCHING CLOSER
IN THIS DARKNESS, IF THEY ARE TOO FAR APART, THEY ARE UNABLE TO PROVIDE SUPPORT TO EACH OTHER, AND RISK BEING PICKED APART ONE-BY-ONE...
WE MIGHT HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO TAKE THEM ALL ON
IF THEY ARE CLOSE ENOUGH THAT REINFOR-CEMENTS KEEP ON COMING,

ALL MEN SHOULD PREPARE TO SHOOT, THIS IS NOT PRACTICE
ALL MEN SHOULD PREPARE TO SHOOT THIS IS NOT PRACTICE
ザッ
The sound of hundreds of men walking over the snow... many, many...
ザキュ
THIS IS BAD
EVERYONE, STAY ALERT

Ahhhhh
EVEN YOUR SALIVA IS FREEZING...

IF WE LET THE VANGUARD GO ON AHEAD, THIS IS RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF THE ENEMY TROOPS

THAT'S AT LEAST A COMPLETE BRIGADE...

WHAT DOES OUR H.Q. PLAN TO DO NOW?

JUST THESE SOLDIERS HERE ARE ALREADY TOO MUCH FOR OUR ENTIRE BATALLION,

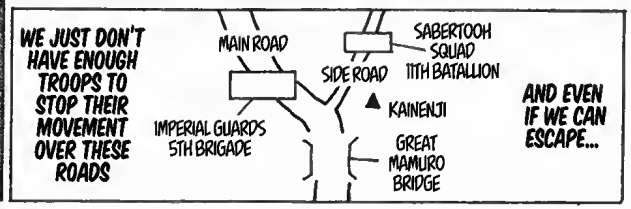
IF THEY GO ON AHEAD, OUR PLAN WILL CRUMBLE APART.... NO... THIS WHOLE OPERATION WILL FAIL

THE BRIDGE WILL EASILY FALL INTO OUR ENEMIES' HANDS

BEFORE WE CAN PROPERLY ESCAPE, WE WILL BE FOLLOWED IN THE CONFUSION

ARE WE SUSPENDING THE PLAN? DON'T TELL ME THEY MIGHT SUDDENLY SHOOT THE BLUE FLARE,

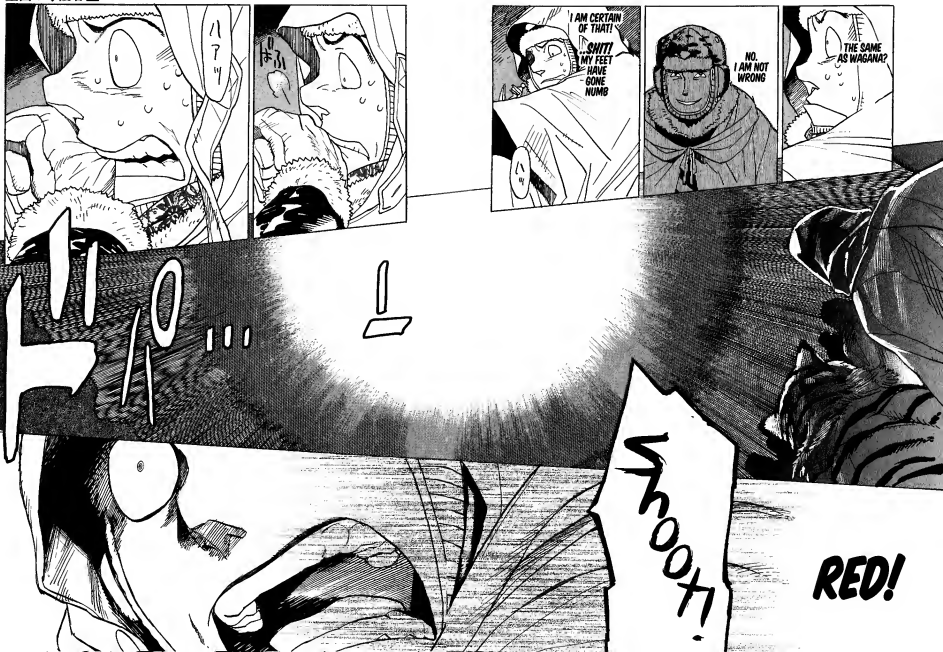
WE JUST DON'T HAVE ENOUGH TROOPS TO STOP THEIR MOVEMENT OVER THESE ROADS

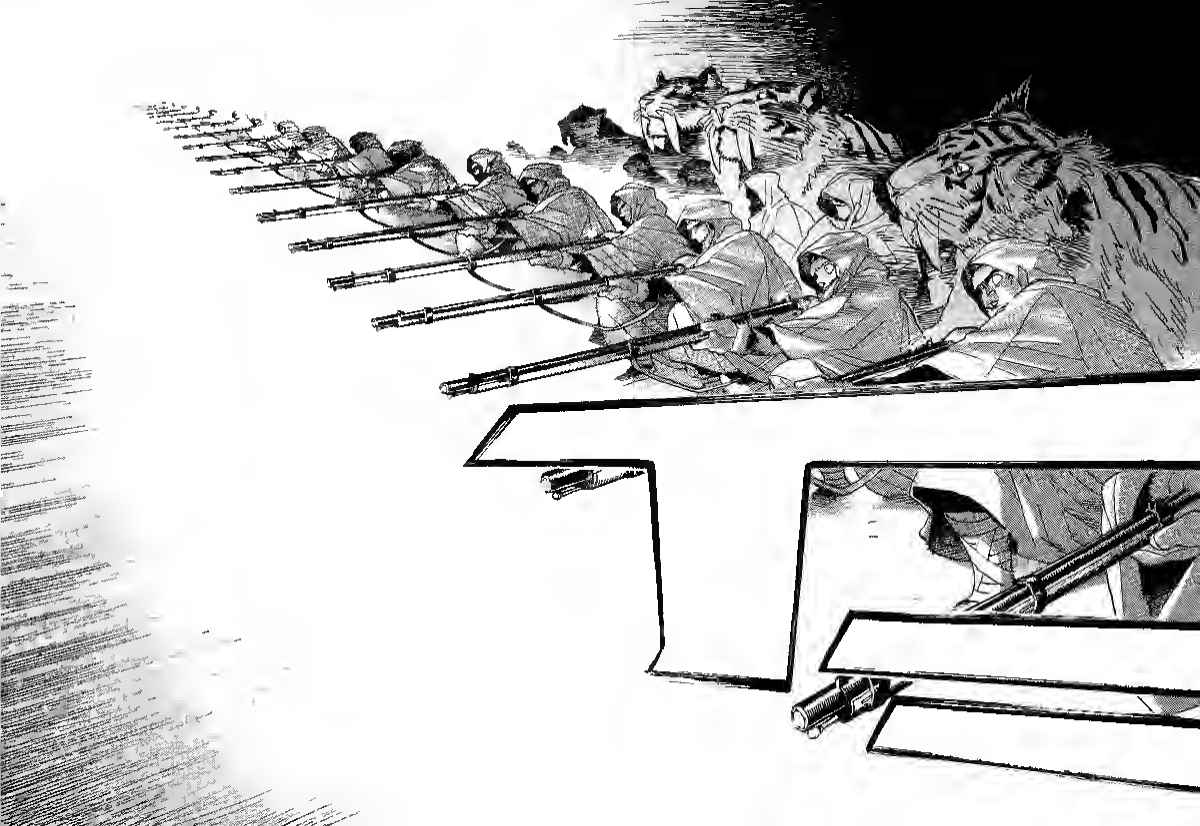


AND EVEN IF WE CAN ESCAPE...

Should I really act without consultation?
AREH'T YOU GOIHG TO FOLLOW THROUGH WITH YOUR PLAHS?
WHY DOH'T THE FLARES GO OFF? WHAT ARE THEY DOIHG AT THE H.Q?!
IF WE ALL SHOOT AT ONCE FROM HERE, THE ENEMY WILL CERTAINLY FALL APART IN THE CONFUSION
THEY ARE ABOUT 180m AWAY. WITH THIS RIFFLE, THEY SHOULD BE IN RANGE...
AM I ONLY FREAKING OUT BECAUSE I'M SEEING SO MANY ENEMIES?
EEH, WHAT SHOULD I DO?
If I have to decide, then...
IT SEEMS I AM THINKING EXACTLY LIKE WAGANA
WHETER I LIKE IT OR NOT, WE WILL ALSO HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO OPEN FIRE AGAINST THEIR MAIN FORCES...

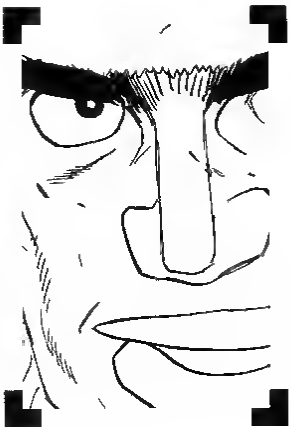
AND THE COMMANDER WOULD STILL PUT THOSE WHO HE DOESN'T BELIEVE IN RIGHT IN FRONT OF THE ENEMIES
WE DIDN'T HAVE ANY BETTER EVIDENCE ABOUT THE ENEMY ROUTE...
NO... NOTHING WOULD CHANGE. THE COMMANDER HATES ME...
IF I HAD ASKED A QUESTION AT THAT TIME...
I'M CERTAIN HE WOULDN'T GO THAT FAR
NO!
DAMN IT ALL!! WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO HERE?
I AM CERTAIN OF THAT, CERTAIN I AM CERTAIN OF THAT!
Now, I have no choice but to attack them

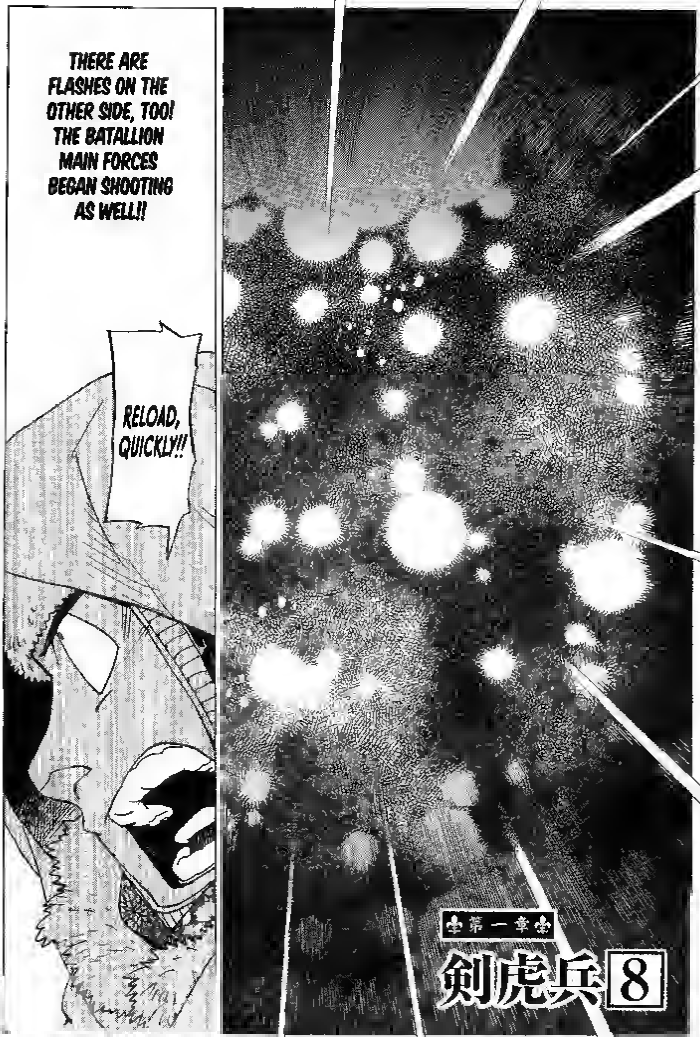

ハアッ
ハアッ
I AM CERTAIN OF THAT!
...SHIT! MY FEET HAVE GONE NUMB
NO. I AM NOT WRONG
THE SAME AS WAGANA?
ドクン...
ドクン!!!
SHOOK!
RED!



editor **JAC**
translator **DiamondEdge**
cleaner/type **M3OW**

皇国の守護者




THERE ARE FLASHES ON THE OTHER SIDE, TOO! THE BATALLION MAIN FORCES BEGAN SHOOTING AS WELL!!
RELOAD, QUICKLY!!
第一章
剣虎兵 8

THEY WILL COUNTER-ATTACK IF WE LET UP!!
HURRY UP!
ENEMY ATTACK!!
UWAAAAAAAAHHHH!!!
ENEMY ATTACK!!
WE'RE SOMEHOW MANAGING TO HIT THEM EVEN IN THIS DARKNESS
SEEMS THEY ARE ALSO FIRING THE CANNONS

Stack the ammo properly so it doesn't fall
Roger
EVEN IF WE DON'T HIT THEM, THIS IS STILL EFFECTIVE IN THIS DARKNESS, THE SUDDEN FLASHES AND ROARS
WILL DEAL A DIRECT BLOW TO THE ENEMY'S SPIRITS
I'M DONE RELOADING!!
SHOOT!!
WAAAAA!!

WHITE FLARES! WITH THIS, OUR ACCURACY WILL IHCREASE!

THE ENEMY REINFORCEMENTS...
WEREN'T JUST A BRIGADE...
HA, HAH!
Perhaps twice as much
JUST THE RIFLEMEN IN THEIR VANGUARD ARE CLOSE TO THE SIZE OF A FULL BATALLION...
YES... BASED ON THE NUMBERS OF TROOPS HERE, IT MUST BE A FULL BATALLION...

Comm-ander? This is no time for laugh—
FIRE!
YOU SAY THAT THANKS TO THE WHITE FLARE, WE CAN SUDDENLY HIT THEM
AGAINST THIS HORDE, WE CAN AIM ANYWHERE AND PROBABLY STILL HIT SOMEONE
WE CAN KEEP GO-ING!
THEY HAVEN'T CAUGHT ON WHAT'S HAPPENING YET...

AAH!
WAAA!!
AH!!
AH!
THAT'S QUITE AN UNSETTLING VIEW, ISN'T IT?
INDEEED IT IS
AH!!
AH!

FIRE ONCE MORE!
WE CAN DO IT! IF WE CAN CRUSH OUR ENEMIES BEFORE THEY CAN DO ANYTHING, THEN....

IN THE MIDDLE OF THE ENEMY LINES, THERE'S A MUSKETEER SQUAD, AND JUST PAST THEM, A LOT OF CAVALRY
THAT'S A GROUP OF OFFICERS
WHAT'S THAT? 545M AWAY FROM US?
What's going on?
AS EXPECTED, THERE'S LITTLE TO NO DISORDER AROUND THAT AREA...
THAT'S PROOF THAT THE COMMANDERS' ORDERS ARE REACHING THAT AREA
PREPARE TO CHARGE!

ALL MEN, PREPARE YOUR BAYO-NETS!
ALL MEN, PREPARE YOUR BAYO-NETS!
THEIR MAIN FORCES ARE CERTAINLY GETTING READY TO STRIKE...
IF POSSIBLE, WE SHOULD SHOOT THEIR MAIN FORCES
LET'S GO!
AND THAT FAR, IT'S LIKELY THE FLASHES AND ROARS ARE LOWER...

YOU WANT TO DO IT, RIGHT?
MY WISH IS THE SAME AS YOURS!

ARE YOU SURE ABOUT THIS, LIEUT-ENANT?
IT DOESN'T MATTER IF WE'RE SURE OR NOT WE ARE THE SABERTOOTH SQUAD!
LET'S PULVERIZE THEM!
WE JUST HAVE TO ATTACK WITH ALL OUR MIGHT
OUR TARGETS ARE THE EHEMY COMMAHDERS! WE SHALL CUT THROUGH THEM FOR 500 METERS!!
ALL MEH, IT'S TIME TO STRIKE!

OOOHH!!
AHH!
OOH!
OHH!!
IT'S COMING FROM ALL SIDES!!
IT'S COMING FROM RIGHT IN FRONT OF US!!
AAH!!
WHAT IS THAT SOUND, WHAT IS IT?!
IS IT A MONSTER?
RELOAD!

CHARGE!!
OOAH!!
OOAH!!
WROA!!
ROOOA!!
OuOOOHHHH!!

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おおぉおおー
ドサッ

NO WAY...
IN THIS UNKNOWN LAND...
AMIDST THE DARKNESS...
I WILL DIE, KILLED AND EATEN BY A BEAST...
ALL MEN, FOLLOW ME!!

2
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WE'VE DISPOSED OF THE ENEMIES HERE
TO DIE LIKE THIS...
SHOULD WE WITH-DRAW?
THE BLUE FLARE HAS NOT BEEN FIRED YET
MOST OF THEM WERE ABLE TO ESCAPE
THEIR ESCAPE ROUTES ARE BLOCKED, THERE'S NO REASON TO WORRY.
WHAT ARE OUR LOS-SES?
ABOUT 10 SOL-DIERS
AND BESIDES, WE STILL HAVE HALF AN HOUR BEFORE THE ESTABLISHED TIME
AND THAT MEANS?

Lieu-
ten-
ant...
SECOND LIEU-TENANT
AND BEING HONEST, WE SHOULD LEAVE THE PLEASANTRIES FOR LATER
PLEASE HELP MEEE!

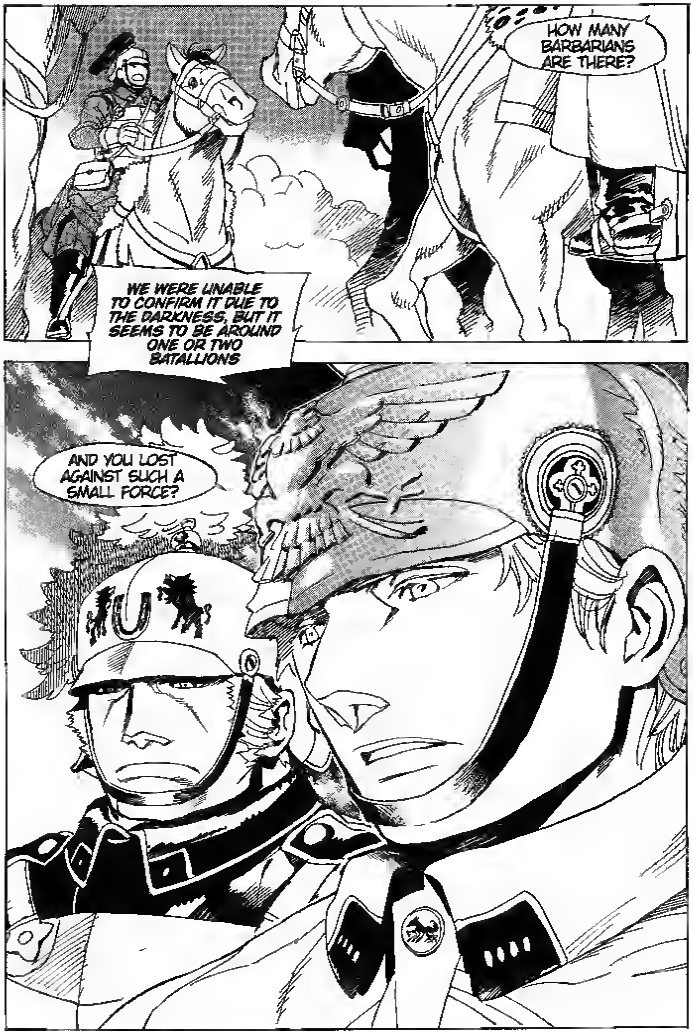
The platoon commander is scary...
ALL MEN OTHER THAN THOSE IN THE VANGUARD ARE EXPECTED TO FALL BACK TO THE MEETING POINT
どれ
HEY, MOVE FASTER
IF YOU ARE AFRAID OF DYING, YOU SNOULD WORK FASTER!
WE NEED TO CONFIRM OUR RETREAT ROUTE! NURRY UP!!
ドカカカ
THE VANGUARD MUSKETEER SQUAD HAS BEEN ATTACKED BY THE ENEMY!

NO WAY!
PLEASE GOD...
HAVE MERCY!!

YOU GO ON
I SHALL PROVIDE SUPPORT
UNDER-STOOD.

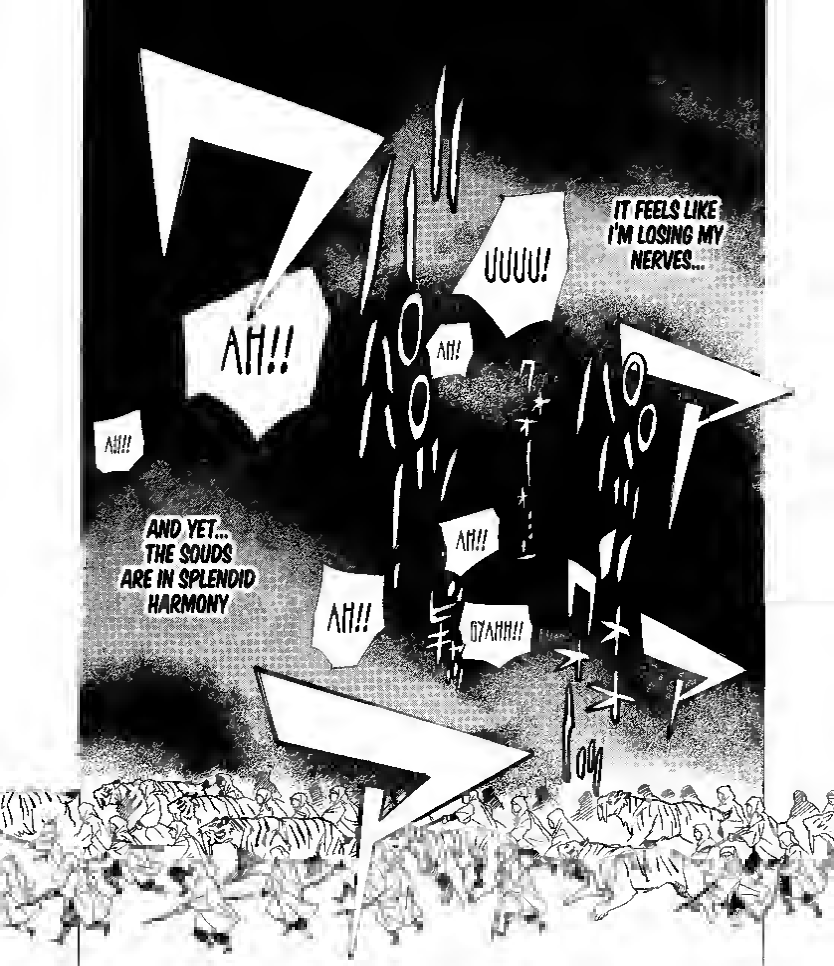
SER-GEANT MAJOR,
DO YOU REMEMBER WHAT YOU ONCE SAID TO ME WHEN WE MET IN THE MILITARY SCHOOL?
A SOILDER'S JOB IS TO RUN
BE CAREFUL WHEN HANDLING THE CATS,
TELL EVERY-ONE
UNDER-STOOD, I'LL GAT-HER EVERY-ONE
WE WILL CIRCLE AROUND THE ENEMIES ALONGSIDE THE FOREST AND PROVIDE BACKUP TO OUR MAIN FORCES
THIRD COMPANY
FIRST COMPANY
SHOULDN'T WE DO THAT, THEN?
HQ
IMPERIAL ARMY VANGUARD SQUAD (ANNIHILATED)
SECOND COMPANY

MASTU-NAGA DIED...
ハアッ
ハッ
YASUDA, UEHARA AND ISHII, TOO
BUT WE WON!
ハッ
ハアッ
AND WE WILL KILL MANY, MANY MORE OF THESE INVADERS!


HOW MANY BARBARIANS ARE THERE?
WE WERE UNABLE TO CONFIRM IT DUE TO THE DARKNESS, BUT IT SEEMS TO BE AROUND ONE OR TWO BATALLIONS
AND YOU LOST AGAINST SUCH A SMALL FORCE?

editor **JAC**
translator **DiamondEdge**
cleaner/type **M3OW**

皇國の守護者



The second squad is dashing

第一章

剣虎兵 9

THE LIGHT OF OUR FLARES IS DISAPPEARING, AND DARKNESS ONCE AGAIN FALLS...
COM-MANDER! TO THE LEFT!
WE NEED TO GO AROUND THEM WITHOUT BEING NOTICED
THE REMAINING ENEMY TROOPS ARE STILL CONFUSED

THE ENEMY MUSKET-EERS ARE GETTING READY TO SHOOT!
THEY ARE AIMING TOWARDS OUR MAIN TROOPS!!
OUR TARGET IS THE ENEMY TROOPS IN THAT DIRECTION.
HURRY UP!

WE HAVE NO LOSSES,
I HAD TO USE THE BUTT OF THE WEAPON, SINCE I WAS STILL RELOAD-ING
THAT'S BECAUSE WE DIDN'T FACE ANY RESIST-ANTCE

ハッ
WHERE ARE THE HEADQUA--
THAT'S OKAY, BUT AS EXPECTED, I RAN OUT OF BREATH
ハア
WHAT'S THE MATTER? ARE YOU TIRED ALREADY?!
THIS MAN HAS IMPRESSIVE STAMINA DESPITE HIS AGE
THEIR VANGUARD HAS BEEN CRUSHED
HE'S ACCOMPANIED BY ONLY TWO PEOPLE
DID THEY ONLY SEND THE MINIMUM NUMBER OF SOLDIERS TO THIS BATTLE?

NOW, WE HAVE TO HELP OUR MEN OVER THERE
GOOD WORK.
JUST WHAT WE NEEDED...
IT'LL BE HARD TO SURPRISE THEM FROM THE SIDES.
WE WILL SET A SQUARE FORM-ATION
!

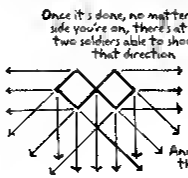
Square Formation

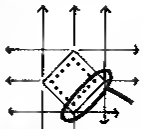
The name is simple because the formation resembles a square. When under attack, this is the most effective defensive formation. Once it is properly executed, our forces have no blind spots at all from inside or out.

Once we have a continuous square, it's defensive power is very high. The only way to destroy this formation would be by bombarding from the outside.

WE'LL JUST THRUST AT ALL OF THEM

ONCE WE COMPLETE OUR FORM-ATION, WE SHALL STRIKE





And our men only have to shoot what's ahead of them, not having to worry about other allies

LET'S GO
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は…
すう
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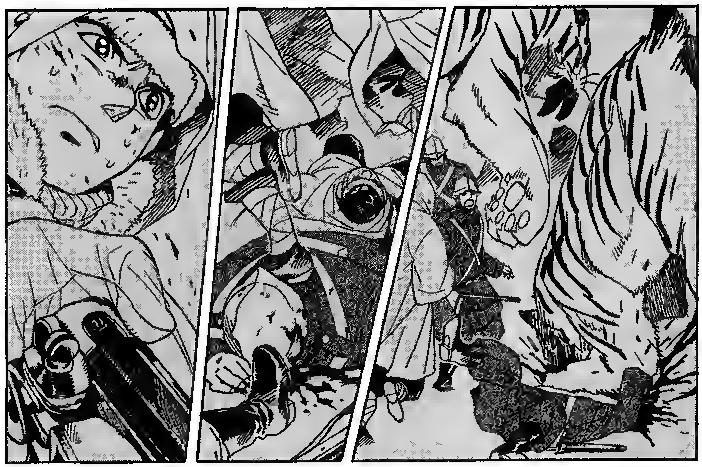
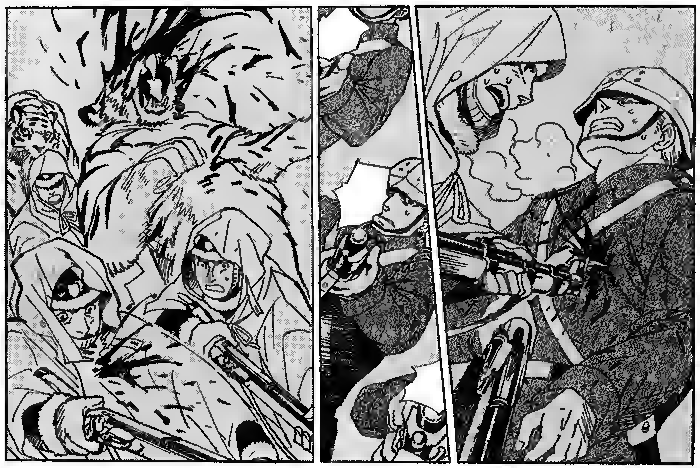
すう
は…

TROOPS
EVERYONE, TAKE THREE DEEP BREATHS

BEFORE LONG, THE ENEMY WILL REGROUP AND PREPARE FOR OUR ATTACK
IF WE END UP BEING COUNTER-ATTACKED,
I WILL BE COUNT-ING ON YOU ALL
HEY
THE HORSES ARE READY, WHAT ABOUT THE CATS?





SEC-OND LIEUT-ENANT!
EVERY-ONE, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
SERG-EANT MAJOR! WE MEET AGAIN!!
AT LEAST HALF OF THE BATALLION IS STILL FIGHTING, AND I DON'T KNOW THEIR CURRENT CONDITION
WE WERE IN FORMATION, BUT SOMEHOW, THEY MANAGED TO BREAK PAST IT
WHERE'S THE COM-MANDER? HE ISN'T WITH YOU?
SECOND LIEUT-ENANT!
NO HE WON'T

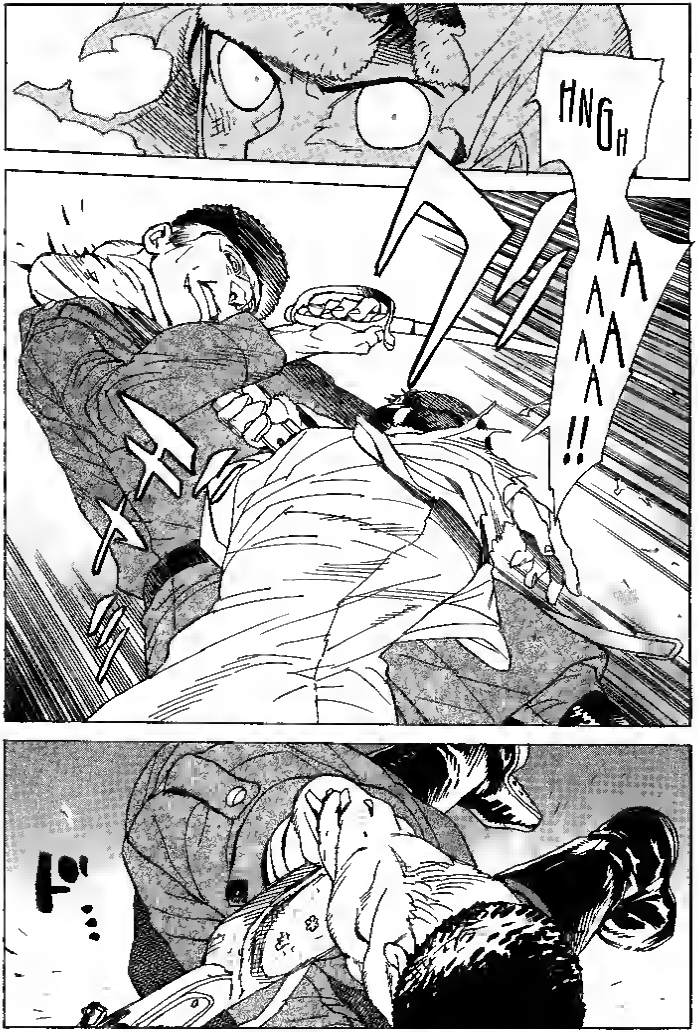
CHIHAYA IS ALWAYS ON THE LIEUTENANT'S SIDE
THEY ARE SAFE I AM CERTAIN OF THAT

ドドド

THE CAVA-LRY?
Hmph...

駄
IT IS
目
USELESS
だ

THE ROYAL TROOPS HAVE ALSO SEEN OUR FLARES
AND UNFORT-UNATELY, OUR MAIN FORCE'S VOLLEYS WEREN'T VERY EFFECTIVE
WE CAME THIS FAR!
BUT IF WE DON'T RETREAT SOON, THERE WILL BE NO CHOICE BUT DYING AN HONOURABLE DEATH...


HNGH
ハハハハハ!!
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ハアハア
I CAN'T GET IT OFF!
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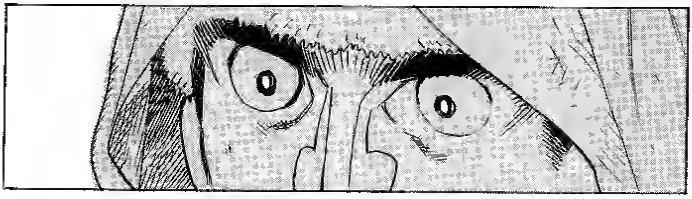
RAAR!
RAAR!
I WAS SAVED...
ALL RIGHT
IT LOOKS LIKE THIS RIFLE IS BROKEN. I DON'T NEED IT ANYMORE.

COME HERE
THAT FACE IS ALMOST AS IF YOU'RE TRYING TO ENCOURAGE ME, AREN'T YOU?
ふん
THERE'S STILL SOME HUMAN FLESH HERE
THIS IS BEING A BIT OF A NUISANCE TO YOU, ISN'T IT?

FIRST LIEUT-ENANT!
OH.. THAT'S GOOD, TWO SOLDIERS AND A CAT...
DO YOU KNOW THE POSITION OF OUR MAIN FORCES?
IN THIS ENVIRONMENT, JUST ONE CAT IS WORTH 20 RIFLEMAN

THEY'VE BEEN WIPED OUT!
THE BATALLION COMMANDER WAS ALSO KILLED IN BATTLE!!
PEOPLE...
I SEE
WHAT A HARSH REALITY...
EVEN THOSE I SHOULD TRY TO REEVALUATE, ALL OF THEM...
THOSE THAT I LIKED... THOSE THAT I DISLIKED...

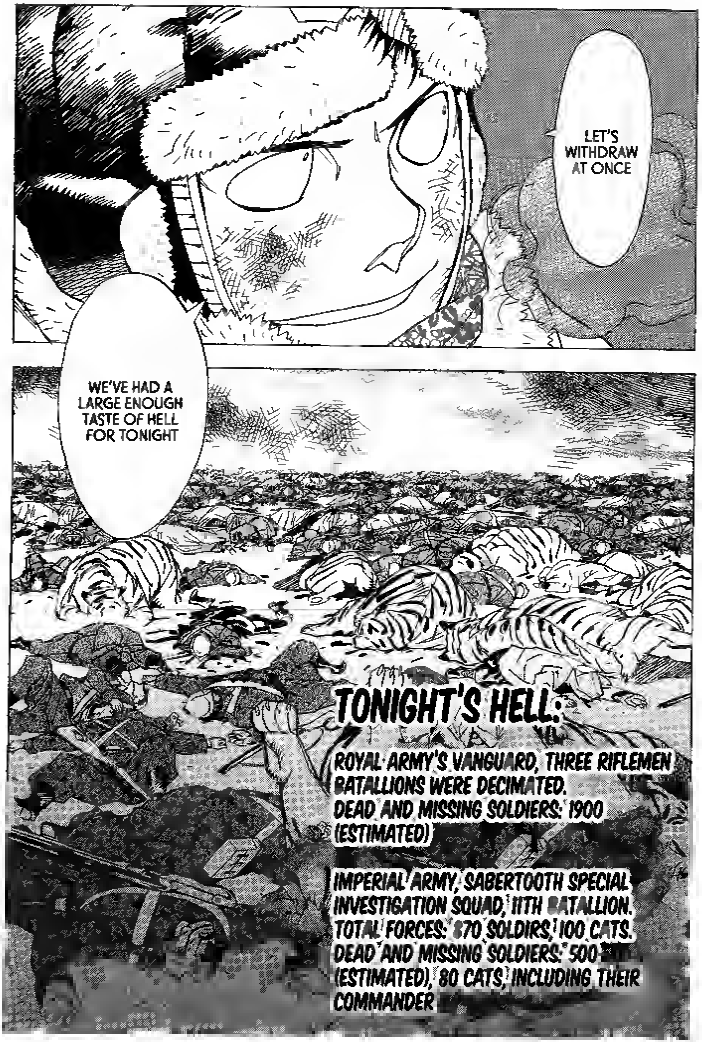
THAT'S AMAZING!
THINGS HAVE BECOME VERY INTER-ESTING!!



....Uh yes...
THINGS HAVE REALLY BECOME VERY INTER-ESTING
YOU ARE THE COMMANDER OF THESE TROOPS NOW, FIRST LIEUTENANT
DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING ELSE INTER-ESTING TO SHARE?
RIGHT NOW, THERE AREN'T MANY OF US REMAINING
WE SHOULD TRY TO RESCUE AS MANY INJURED SOLDIERS AS WE CAN, AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE,
THEN FIND MISSING SOLDIERS.
OF COURSE, I WILL HELP
BUT THAT WOULD BE QUITE DIFFICULT!

HOW MUCH ARE YOU WORTH?
WHAT ABOUT ME?
THE WORTH OF A BRAVE MAN'S LIFE IS NOT THE SAME OF THAT OF SOME FOOL
THEREFORE, WE WILL DO AS I SAY
I AM CERTAIN THAT THIS IS THE LEAST ANYBODY SHOULD BE ABLE TO DO
OR THOSE THAT COULD STILL HAVE BEEN SAVED, BUT WERE ABAN-DONED?
AND WHAT ABOUT THOSE WHO ARE STILL FIGHT-ING?

AM I WRONG?
WE WERE ABLE TO RESCUE AT LEAST 50 MEN, BUT
WE ALSO ENDED UP LOSING AT LEAST 20 MEN THAT WERE AIDING IN THE RESCUE
DID THEY FIRE THE BLUE FLARE SIGNALING RETREAT?
I WONDER IF THOSE MANNING THE CANNONS ARE STILL ALIVE
THEY SHOULD BE FIRING SOON

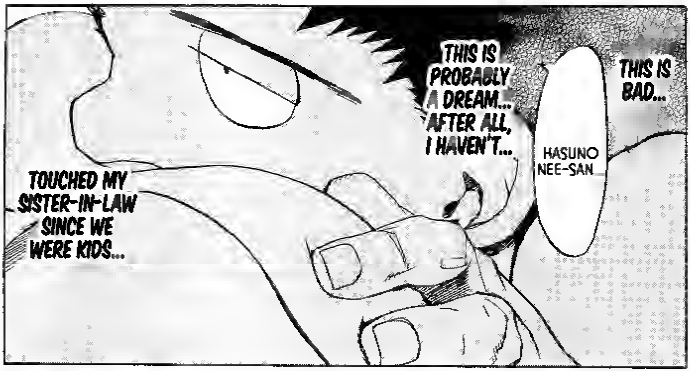

LET'S WITHDRAW AT ONCE
WE'VE HAD A LARGE ENOUGH TASTE OF HELL FOR TONIGHT
TONIGHT'S HELL:
ROYAL ARMY'S VANGUARD, THREE RIFLEMEN BATALLIONS WERE DECIMATED.
DEAD AND MISSING SOLDIERS: 1900 (ESTIMATED)
IMPERIAL ARMY, SABERTOOTH SPECIAL INVESTIGATION SQUAD, 11TH BATALLION.
TOTAL FORCES: 870 SOLDIRS, 100 CATS.
DEAD AND MISSING SOLDIERS: 500 (ESTIMATED), 80 CATS, INCLUDING THEIR COMMANDER

editor **JAC**
translator **DiamondEdge**
cleaner/type **M3OW**

皇国の守護者

第一章

剣虎兵10


THIS IS BAD...
HASUNO NEE-SAN...
THIS IS PROBABLY A DREAM... AFTER ALL, I HAVEN'T...
TOUCHED MY SISTER-IN-LAW SINCE WE WERE KIDS...

HER PARTNER IS MY BROTHER-IN-LAW...
THE YOUNG LORD OF THE KUSHIRO FAMILY
Nao-chan...
ONCE I WAKE UP...
I DO WANT TO ENJOY THINGS AS THEY ARE, BUT...
I WILL PROBABLY HAVE QUITE DEPLORABLE THOUGHTS...

は、
Yasutane-sama...
PHEW, THAT WAS A CLOSE CALL
IT WOULD BE SHAMEFUL TO GET FROSTBITE DOWN THERE
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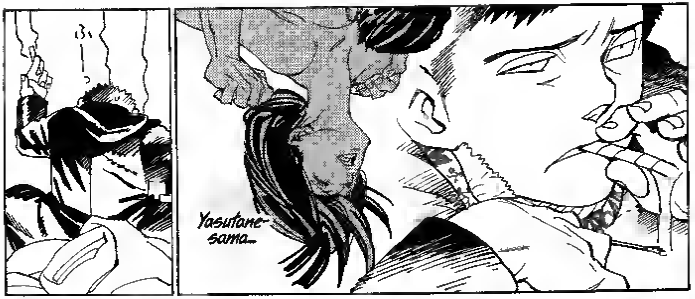
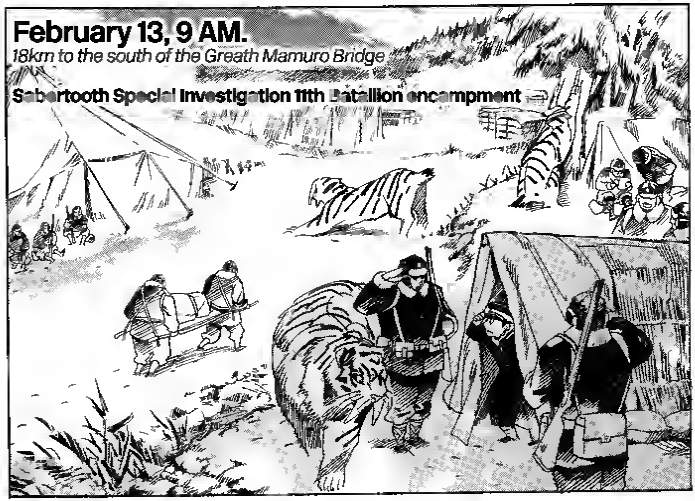

Yasutane-sama...

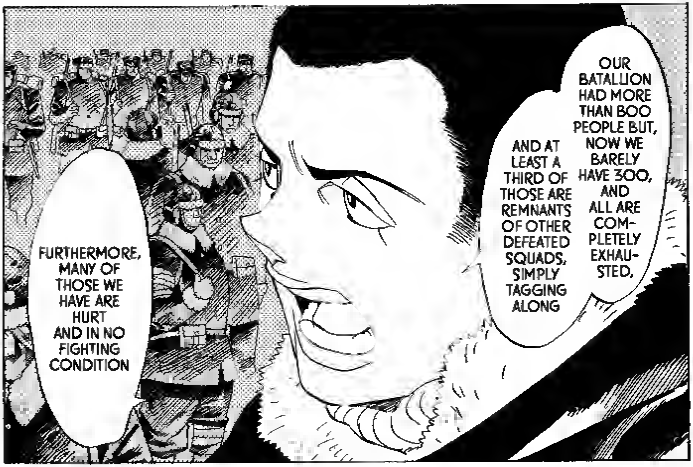

February 13, 9 AM.
18km to the south of the Greath Mamuro Bridge
Sabertooth Special Investigation 11th Battalion encampment

IF I CANNOT ENDURE THIS AND PISS MYSELF, TROOP MORALE WILL CERTAINLY BE SHAKEN
I'm not entirely sure if having such a strong urge to urinate in this desperate situation is a good or bad thing
Toilet, toilet
COMISSIONED OFFICERS MUST WALK CALMLY AT ALL TIMES...

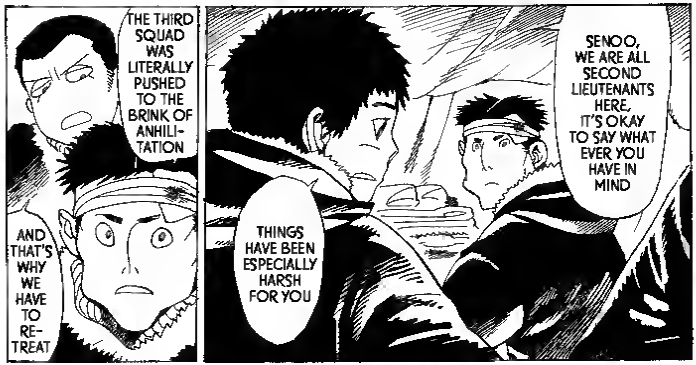
Toilet!!
AT ALL TIMES
Toilet
MUST WALK CALMLY...
Toilet
COMMISSIONED OFFICERS...
QUICKLY! IT DOESN'T MATTER IF IT'S ON THE SHORE OR EVEN ATOP THE WATER. JUST TAKE ME DOWN!
WE'LL BE ABLE TO SEE THEM SOON, LIEUTENANT COLONEL!!
THE BRAVE HEROES THAT STAND FIRM AND DEFEND US IN THIS LOSING BATTLE!!
ガヤガヤ
IF IT WILL ALLOW ME TO GET OFF THIS, I DON'T CARE IF WE FIND HEROES OR A BUNCH OF IDIOTS,
HECK, EVEN COMPLETE BLOCK-HEADS WOULD BE OKAY
I CAN SEE IT

ANY-ONE HERE,
THE ONES THAT ARE HOLDING OUT, THEY ARE A BIT...
IDIO-TIC?
I AM SASA-JIMA, LIEUT-ENANT COL-ONEL OF THE NAVY.
COMM-ANDER OF THE MOBIL-IZATION SUPPORT HEAD OFFICE OF --
I AM FIRST LIEUT-ENANT SHINJO NAOE

I HAVE A BAD FEELING ABOUT THIS
IT SEEMS THAT I HAVE JUST NOW OFFICIALLY INFORMED YOU OF YOUR FIELD PROMOTION!
CONGRATULATIONS, CAPTAIN SHINJO!
IT WOULD BE A SENSIBLE DECISION AFTER THE MASSIVE DAMAGE WE SUFFERED
COME ON, DREAM A BIT, SENOO,
I DON'T THINK SO, ESPECIALLY AFTER COMMANDER SHINJO'S SUDDEN PROMOTION, RIGHT?
HEY! DID YOU BY ANY CHANCE RECEIVE THE ORDER TO WITHDRAW?


OUR BATALLION HAD MORE THAN 800 PEOPLE BUT, NOW WE BARELY HAVE 300, AND ALL ARE COMPLETELY EXHAUSTED.
AND AT LEAST A THIRD OF THOSE ARE REMNANTS OF OTHER DEFEATED SQUADS, SIMPLY TAGGING ALONG
FURTHERMORE, MANY OF THOSE WE HAVE ARE HURT AND IN NO FIGHTING CONDITION

WE ALSO LOST OUR CANNONS, AND ONLY HAVE 5 CATS IN FIGHTING CONDITION,
AND HOW MANY OF THE DOUJUTSU SQUAD ARE FULLY RESTED? 2, 3 PEOPLE?
WE HAVE ONLY FOUR COMMISSIONED OFFICERS ALIVE,
AND I WONDER HOW OFTEN THAT NUMBER CHANGED


SENOO, WE ARE ALL SECOND LIEUTENANTS HERE, IT'S OKAY TO SAY WHAT EVER YOU HAVE IN MIND
THINGS HAVE BEEN ESPECIALLY HARSH FOR YOU
THE THIRD SQUAD WAS LITERALLY PUSHED TO THE BRINK OF ANHILITATION
AND THAT'S WHY WE HAVE TO RETREAT

EVERYONE IN OUR BATALLION WOULD PROBABLY BE KILLED
IF WE WERE TO FIGHT THEM HEAD ON ONCE MORE
YOU MAY BE RIGHT...

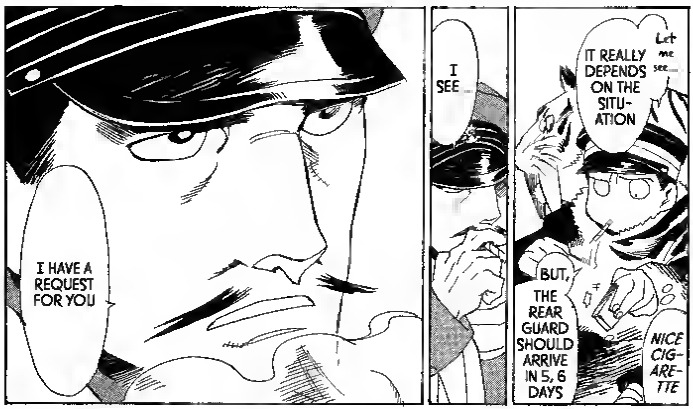
AREN'T YOU HUNGRY? YOU CAN GO GET CAPTURED BY YOURSELF, THEY MIGHT SHARE SOME OF THEIR BREAD WITH YOU.
WE AREN'T GETTING MORE FOOD DELI-VERED
WELL, WE WILL PROBABLY BE RESTOCKED BY BOAT SOON, SO
THERE'S NO ONE ELSE THAT WANTS TO KEEP ON FIGHTING

SINCE OUR LAST ATTACK, WE'VE ONLY HAD A FEW MINOR SKIRMISHES.
WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO BUY ENOUGH TIME FOR THE ARTILLERY SQUAD TO CROSS THE BRIDGE
ROYAL ARMY'S ROUTE
KANGKOT
GREAT MAMURO BRIDGE
IMPERIAL GUARD'S 5TH BRIDAGE
DEFENSIVE LINE
SABERTOOTH SPECIAL INVESTIGATION 11TH BATALLION
IT'S NOT IMPOS-SIBLE FOR US TO CONTINUE

DOES THAT MEAN WE HAVE TO EAT HORSE MEAT?
THE BATTLEFIELD IS LITTERED WITH THE CORPSES OF HORSES, FRIEND AND FOE ALIKE, BUT THAT TAKES SOME EXTRA DISPO-SITION
THEY'VE PROBABLY PASSED BY THE GARRISONS THAT HAVE BEEN ABANDONED, SO I GUESS WE SHOULD ENDURE A BIT LONGER...
IF OUR SUPPLIES ARE COMING, IT'S CERTAINLY BEING TRANSPORTED FROM FAR AWAY
YOU SEEM TO RELY ON THEM A LOT
Cer-tai-nly.
IT'S CUTE
THAT'S WHAT I CALL THE SABER-TOOTH TIGERS.
CATS?
WE ALSO HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT FEEIDNG THE CATS...

IF WE START MAKING FIRES FOR COOKING, THE ENEMY SCOUTS MIGHT BE ABLE TO FIND US.
TO SAY...
BUT IF WE EAT FROZEN, RAW MEAT, THE SOLDIERS WILL LIKELY HAVE INDIGESTION,
Not to mention it would completely drain their stamina

ARE YOU ABLE TO FIGHT?
THAT'S AN INCREDIBLY STUPID WAY TO DIE
BEING FOUND OUT BECAUSE OF THE SMELL OF DIARRHEA, THEN ATTACKED BY SURPRISE...


I HAVE A REQUEST FOR YOU
I SEE...
Let me see...
IT REALLY DEPENDS ON THE SITUATION
BUT, THE REAR GUARD SHOULD ARRIVE IN 5, 6 DAYS
NICE CIGARETTE

E-EXCUSE ME, LIEUTENANT COLONEL
BUT WITH WHAT AUTHORITY DO YOU PLAN TO DO SO?
A REASON-ABLE QUESTION I AM...
AS THE COMMANDER OF THE MOBILIZATION SUPPORT SQUAD, I HAVE BEEN GIVEN THE AUTHORITY TO OVERSEE ANY SUCH OPERATIONS THAT MIGHT BE NECESSARY
NOT COMMAND, BUT "OVERSEE"?
WHAT OTHER AUTHORITY SHOULD I HAVE? I DON'T UNDER-STAND
THAT'S WHY I'M BEING SO HUMBLE
SO THAT'S HOW IT IS, HEH

DO YOU KNOW WHAT I'M GOING TO ASK?
I DON'T LIKE THIS
And so,
I HAVE A REQ-UEST FOR YOU
DON'T JOKE WITH US. WE'RE NOT 'HEROES'
TERRIBLE, TERRIBLE THIS IS REALLY TRULY DISGUSTING
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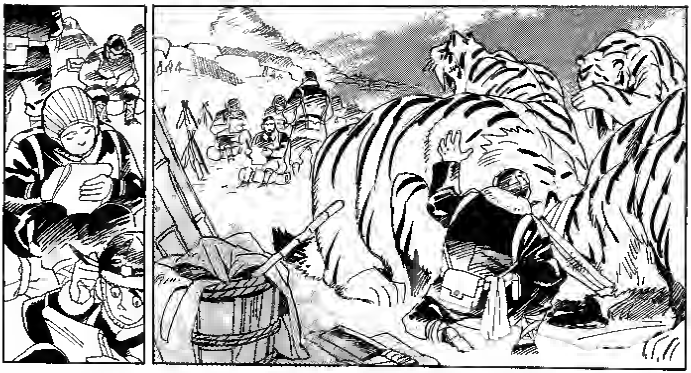


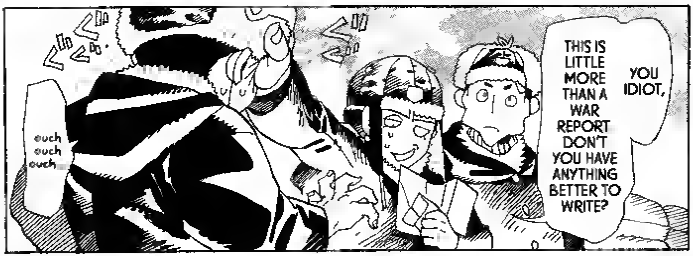
IT SEEMS THAT EVERYONE WHO ISN'T WORKING IS WRITTING A LETTER HOME
That's a bit depressing
CAN'T BLAME THEM FOR THAT

So, is this one here something you wrote earlier?
WHEN DID YOU?
WE ALL SAW A LOT OF PEOPLE DYING WITHOUT A CHANCE TO WRITE TO THEIR FAMILIES
THAT NIGHT, FROM DECIDING AND PLANNING THE ATTACK TO EXECUTING IT, IT ALL ONLY TOOK THREE, MAYBE FOUR HOURS

IMMEDIATELLY AFTER OUR SQUAD CROSSED THE GREAT MAMURO BRIDGE, OUR ENGINEERS BLEW THE BRIDGE UP...
WE BELIEVE THERE ARE STILL A THOUSAND OF OUR MEN LEFT BEHIND ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE BRIDGE, BUT...
IT HAS BEEN DECIDED WE COULDN'T WAIT MUCH LONGER...

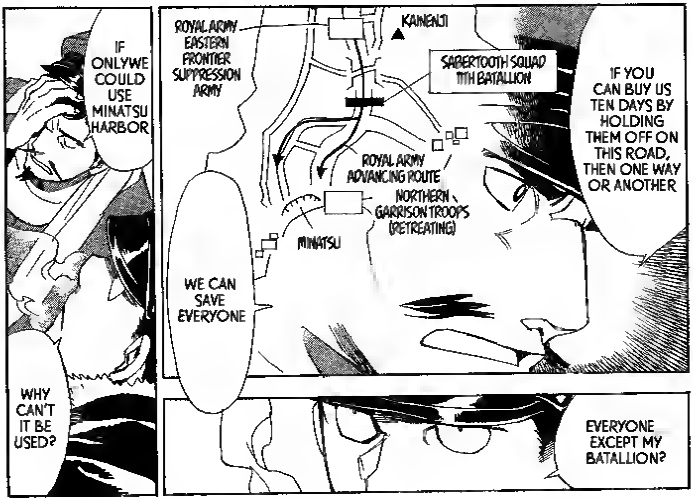
"DEAR YUKARI"
HMMM, A GIRL, EH?!
WHAT BAD HAND-WRITING...
"I HOPE YOU ARE WELL"

"ARE YOU DOING WELL WITH YOUR STUDIES? EVERYTHING IS FINE OVER HERE."
WHAT? THIS IS JUST YOUR LITTLE SISTER


YOU IDIOT,
THIS IS LITTLE MORE THAN A WAR REPORT DON'T YOU HAVE ANYTHING BETTER TO WRITE?
ouch ouch ouch

ANYWAY, IF WE DON'T GET ANY FOOD SOON, I DON'T THINK THE POSTAL SERVICE WILL--
EVEN IF THIS DOESN'T GET DELI-VERED
I UNDER-STAND WHY YOU'D WRITE IT
MY CAT AND MY SUBOR-DINATES IN FRONT OF MY EYES, THEY
WE WON'T DIE.
AFTER ALL, HE IS OUR COM-MANDER NOW
HE'S NOT SOMEONE WHO WOULD JUST ACCEPT DEATH

TEN DAYS, CAPTAIN...
WE ARE BEHIND SCHEDULE,
IN ORDER TO RESCUE ALL OUR REMAINING TROOPS, WE NEED 10 MORE DAYS


ROYAL ARMY EASTERN FRONTIER SUPPRESSION ARMY
KAINANJI
SABERTOOTH SQUAD 11TH BATALLION
ROYAL ARMY ADVANCING ROUTE
NORTHERN GARRISON TROOPS (RETREATING)
MINATSU
IF ONLYWE COULD USE MINATSU HARBOR
WHY CAN'T IT BE USED?
IF YOU CAN BUY US TEN DAYS BY HOLDING THEM OFF ON THIS ROAD, THEN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER
WE CAN SAVE EVERYONE
EVERYONE EXCEPT MY BATALLION?

I DON'T HAVE ANY PROOF, BUT IT'S LIKELY THEY'RE SIDING WITH OUR ENEMIES,
BESIDES THAT, MINATSU'S MAYOR STRONGLY ENFORCES THE GRAND CODE, SO IT WOULD BE POINTLESS TO PRESS THEM FOR HELP
THE ONLY PLACE WE CAN USE IS THE COLD, WIND EXPOSED SHORE OF THE KITA-MINATSU BEACH,
THIS IS A VERY TROUBLE-SOME MISSION FOR MY BATALLION
I RECO-GNIZE YOUR FAMILY NAME
FAMILY NAME?
IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH ANY-THING. I'M ON MY OWN ON THIS

NO, THAT'S NOT TRUE
YOU ARE RELATED TO ONE OF THE FIVE RULING FAMILIES, AREN'T YOU?
I LOOKED INTO THAT
WE ARE NOT TIED BY BLOOD, I WAS MERELY RAISED BY THEM,
BUT I AM ONLY REALLY GIVEN THEIR LEFTOVERS
IT'S NOT AS IF YOU NEED TO BE WIPED OUT
IT DOES LOOK LIKE THAT
THAT MIGHT HAPPEN WHATEVER YOU DO
IS THIS A THREAT?
I JUST BORROWED EVERYTHING ELSE
THE ONLY THING I HAVE FROM THEM, IS A SINGLE CHARACTER, 城

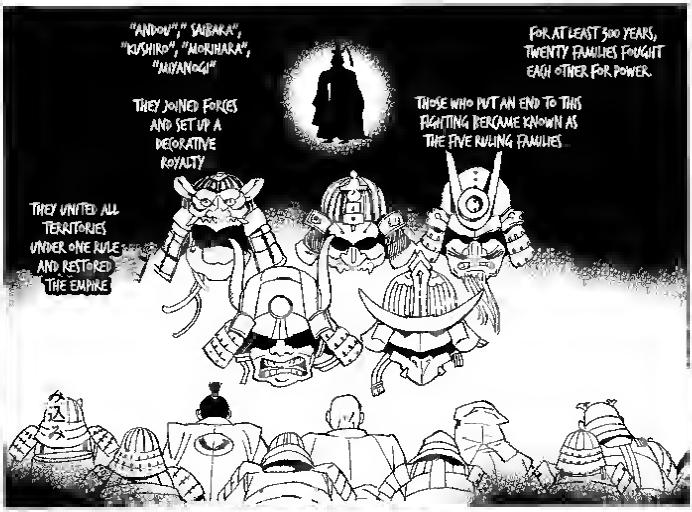
TL NOTE MEANING "CASTLE"

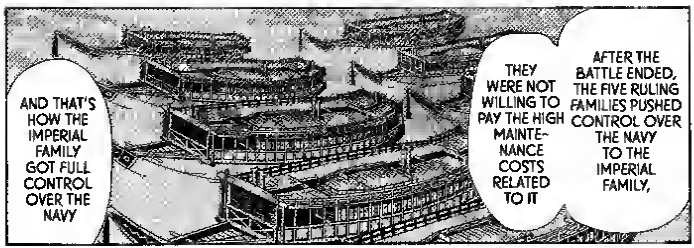
THAT IS CORRECT
RESCUING 12,000 MEN IN EXCHANGE FOR THE 300 MEMBERS OF YOUR BATALLION
IF THAT'S WHAT IS NEEDED, IT'S QUITE A GOOD DEAL
YOU COULD BE BEHEADED FOR TRANS-GRESSION
THEN, WE COULD FIND ANY OTHER UNLUCKY CAPTAIN OR LIEUTENANT TO COMMAND YOUR BATALLION
DO YOU THINK YOUR SOLDIERS WOULD HATE YOU?
OR MAYBE EVEN THAT CUTE LITTLE KITTEN OF YOURS...

WE NEED NEW DOUJUTSU SOLDIERS, CATS, AND AT LEAST 200 MORE SOLDIERS, FROM INFANTRY, ARTILLERY, AND CAVALRY NOT TO MENTION EXTRA PROVISIONS
IF YOU CANNOT PROVIDE THOSE, THEN THIS IS ABSOLUTELY POINTLESS
.....
FIRST, HOW MANY REINFORCEMENTS DO YOU HAVE?
THAT CAN BE ARRANGED
YOU'RE SAYING THE TROOPS LED BY HIS HIGHNESS THE PRINCE ARE FIGHTING?
BUT OUR FATE SEEMS A BIT WORSE THAN EVERYBODY ELSE'S
THERE ARE OTHER BRIGADES THAT ARE STILL FIGHTING,
YOU ARE NOT THE ONLY ONES LAMENTING THEIR FATES
ARE OTHER FRIENDLY TROOPS HAVING THE SAME MISFORTUNE AS US?

AND IN CASE THIS IS ALL TRUE, THEY ARE CONTENT IN JUST SWEARING THEIR REVERENCE TOWARDS THE IMPERIAL HOUSE-HOLD
AND THE IMPERIAL GUARDS ARE COMPRISED SOLELY OF VOLUNTEER SOLDIERS WHO DON'T WANT TO SEEM WEEK
THIS IS JUST SOMETHING I'VE HEARD, BUT YOUR HIGHNESS COMMODORE SANEHITO IS A GREAT PERSON,
IT SEEMS LIKE HE SIMPLY IGNORED THE ORDERS TO WITHD-RAWAL
EVEN IN THIS LOSING BATTLE, HE BELIEVES IT'S THE DUTY OF THE ROYAL FAMILY TO GIVE US HOPE
IF THAT'S THE CASE,
BUT IS THAT HOW THE SOLDIERS REALLY FEEL?
THESE COM-MENTS ARE A BIT DIS-RESPE-CTFUL
YOU THINK EVERYONE WOULD JUST DO ANYTHING FOR THE IMPERIAL HOUSE-HOLD?
AT LEAST HALF OF THE HIGH-RANKING OFFICERS OF THE NAVY ARE RELATED IN SOME WAY WITH THE FIVE RULING FAMILIES
JUST ONE LIEUTENANT COLONEL WILL PROVIDE US SUPPLIES AND SOLDIERS IS THAT POSSIBLE? WOULDN'T THAT BE JUST TOO TROUBLESOME?

COMPARED TO THE ARMY, WHICH IS COMPLETELY IN THEIR HANDS, THE INFLUENCE OF THE FIVE RULING FAMILIES ON THE NAVY IS MUCH LOWER
THERE'S NO NEED TO WORRY ABOUT THAT THE NAVY IS DIRECTLY CONTROLLED BY THE IMPERIAL HOUSEHOLD


"ANDOU"," SAIBARA", "KUSHIRO", "MORIHARA", "MIYANOGI"
FOR AT LEAST 500 YEARS, TWENTY FAMILIES FOUGHT EACH OTHER FOR POWER.
THEY JOINED FORCES AND SET UP A DECORATIVE ROYALTY
THOSE WHO PUT AN END TO THIS FIGHTING BECAME KNOWN AS THE FIVE RULING FAMILIES
THEY UNITED ALL TERRITORIES UNDER ONE RULE AND RESTORED THE EMPIRE


AND THAT'S HOW THE IMPERIAL FAMILY GOT FULL CONTROL OVER THE NAVY
THEY WERE NOT WILLING TO PAY THE HIGH MAINTE-NANCE COSTS RELATED TO IT
AFTER THE BATTLE ENDED, THE FIVE RULING FAMILIES PUSHED CONTROL OVER THE NAVY TO THE IMPERIAL FAMILY.

BUT, IN THE FIRST PLACE,
YOU YOU ARE PART OF THE FIVE RULING FAMILIES, RAISED BY THE KUSHIRO FAMILY WHOSE SIDE ARE YOU ON?
IT IS TRUE THAT I AM IN SOME WAY RELATED TO THEM
THAT DOESN'T MEAN I HAVE ANY PARTICULAR LOVE FOR THEM,
AT LEAST AS FAR AS THIS, YOU WILL HAVE TO TRUST ME
EITHER WAY, ALL THE NAVAL BUDGET IS ON THE IMPERIAL FAMILY'S HANDS THEREFORE, ANY POWER THE FIVE RULING FAMILIES MIGHT NAVE IS EFFECTIVELLY VOID
"COMMANDER", "SECRETARY-GENERAL", "WARSHIP COMMANDER", "COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF" THESE ARE ALL KEY POSITIONS OCCUPIED BY THE GENERAL PUBLIC
THEY HAVE A LOT OF POWER IN THEIR HANDS
YES THE SO-CALLED 'HARDSHIPS' YOU ARE WORRIED ABOUT DO NOT EXIST
AND BESIDES, I AM UNDER DIRECT ORDERS OF OUR HIGH COMMAND I CAN CHANGE SOLDIER ASSIGNEMENTS WITHOUT AN OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT
THAT'S THE KIND OF INFLUENCE I POSSESS ON THE NAVY
IN OTHER WORDS, THE FIVE RULING FAMILIES CAN'T JUST ORDER THE NAVY AS THEY PLEASE, UNLIKE THE ARMY

PLEASE PROMISE ME ONE THING I AM BEING EXTREMELY SELF-CENTERED, BUT
MY SOLDIERS, CATS AND MYSELF IN CASE WE SURVIVE, BUT BECOME PRISONERS
YOU SEEM QUITE RELIABLE
THE SOLD-IERS, AT LEAST I AM SURE THEY CAN BE RIGHT AFTER COMIS-SIONED OFFICERS
WELL, I DIDN'T SAY THAT
YOU WANT TO BE PUT ON A LIST OF PRISONERS TO BE EXCHAN-GED?

AT LEAST TRY TO PUT THEM RIGHT AHEAD OFFICERS WHO ARE BELOW MY RANK
THE CATS WOULD OBVIOUSLY BE LAST, AFTER YOU
AND THEN,
OF COURSE, THE CATS
YOU'RE QUITE AN UPFRONT MAN
I'D SAY I'M NOT THAT DIFFERENT FROM YOU, LIEUTENANT COLONEL,
PLEASE EXCUSE MY RUDENESS IN STATING SO
NO, NOTHING OF THE SORT, CAPTAIN
I'VE BEEN CALLED UPFRONT THE NAVY, TOO

ONCE THE SOLDIERS ARE DISCHARGED FROM SERVICE, THEY NEED TO BUY A REASONABLE FIELD TO KEEP THEIR CATS
AND THE FAMILIES OF THOSE WHO DIE, OR END UP MAIMED, COULD RECEIVE A GREATER PENSION
I HOPE THIS DOESN'T BRING ANY TROUBLE TO YOU
LEAVE IT TO ME.
I WILL MAKE A LIST ONCE I'M BACK AT HEADQUARTERS ANYTHING ELSE?
Because I seem to be surrounded by trouble
I'D LIKE TO PROVIDE SOME EXTRA REWARD TO THE SOLDIERS
THAT'S A SURPRISINGLY NUMBLE WISH
I'M FEELING AS IF I'M TRYING TO SEDUCE SOME PRETTY LADY IN THE IMPERIAL CAPITAL
HOWEVER, I AM NOT SOME TOWN BEAUTY, IS THAT OKAY?
I CAN OPEN AN APPLICATION FOR A LIFETIME PENSION ON THE LEVEL OF A HIGH RANKING NAVY SOLDIER, AS WELL AS GIVING A CONDECORATION FOR HONOR
WHAT A GREAT GUY!

SO HAVE WE REACHED A MUTUAL AGREEMENT?
IF THAT'S NOT ENOUGH AHH, I GUESS I CAN GIVE YOU SOME CANDY
AFTER THAT, IF YOU SO DESIRE, I COULD RECOMMEND YOU FOR THE NAVY LANDING FORCES.
IT IS HARD TO GET INTO AN AGREEMENT THAT MAY LEAD FOR MANY PEOPLE TO GET KILLED IN BATTLE
THIS IS AN ARRANGEMENT WE MUST MAKE IN THIS SITTUATION
MUTUAL OR NOT,
HOWEVER, THIS IS A PROMISE
THAT'S VERY HONEST OF YOU
THAT, I PROMISE
I, SASAJIMA SADANOBU, GIVE YOU MY WORD
CAPTAIN I WILL DO MY BEST TO FULFILL OUR ARRANGEMENTS, AND,
IN CASE YOU SURVIVE, I'LL DEFINITELY AID YOU

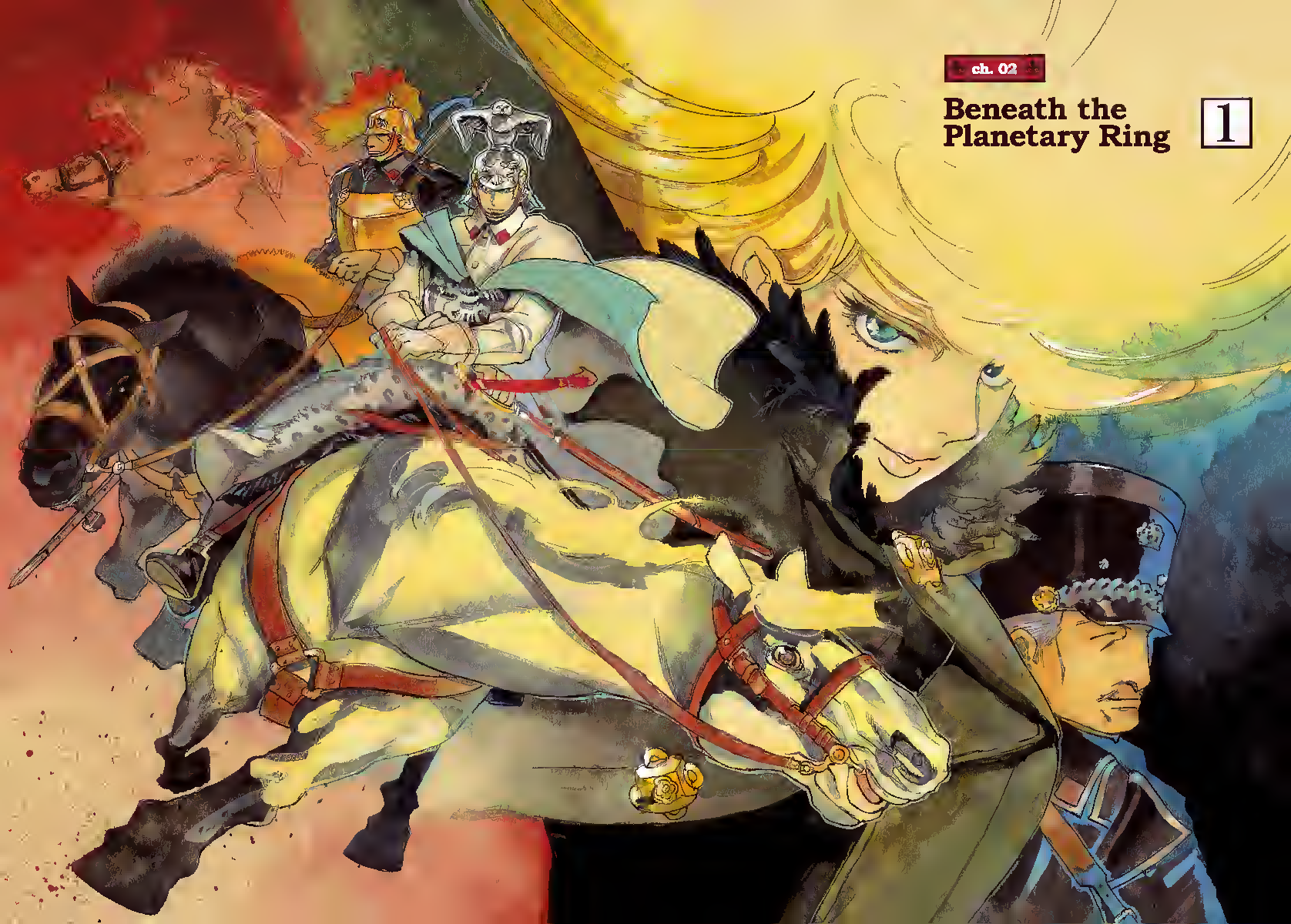
THE SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS SABERTOOTH SQUAD 11TH BATALLION, DURING THE NEXT TEN DAYS, WILL BE ASSISTING THE NORTHERN GARRISON TROOPS IN THE REAR GUARD
I'D LIKE TO SMOKE A BIT LONGER
.....
THIS MAN...
UNDERSTOOD, LIEUTENANT COLONEL
I'LL GIVE YOU A SACK
SO, WHAT YOU'RE SAYING IS THAT THEY ACCEPTED THAT HEROIC TASK, LIEUTENANT CAPTAIN?
SO, HOW AS WE EXPECTED, THEY REALLY ARE HEROES!

THAT MAN HE'S NO HERO, NOR HE IS AN ALLY OF JUSTICE
WHAT?! I CAN'T NEAR YOU, LIEUT-ENANT COLONEL!
AHH, AFTER ALL, I DO HAVE YET ANOTHER REQUEST...
IF THERE IS EVEN A SMALL POSSIBILITY OF THIS BEING POSSIBLE, YOU MUST DO THIS...
IF THAT'S OKAY...
TO RESCUE 12,000 MEN, ONLY A SPECIFIC MEDICINE CAN BE USED
BUT, I DON'T KNOW IF THAT WAS INDEED A MEDICINE, OR JUST POISON
I CAN'T NEAR YOU!

editor **JAC**
translator **DiamondEdge**
cleaner/type **M3OW**

皇国の守護者

THE PLANETARY RING...
IT CAN BE SEEN EVEN IN THIS COUNTRY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Beneath the Planetary Ring
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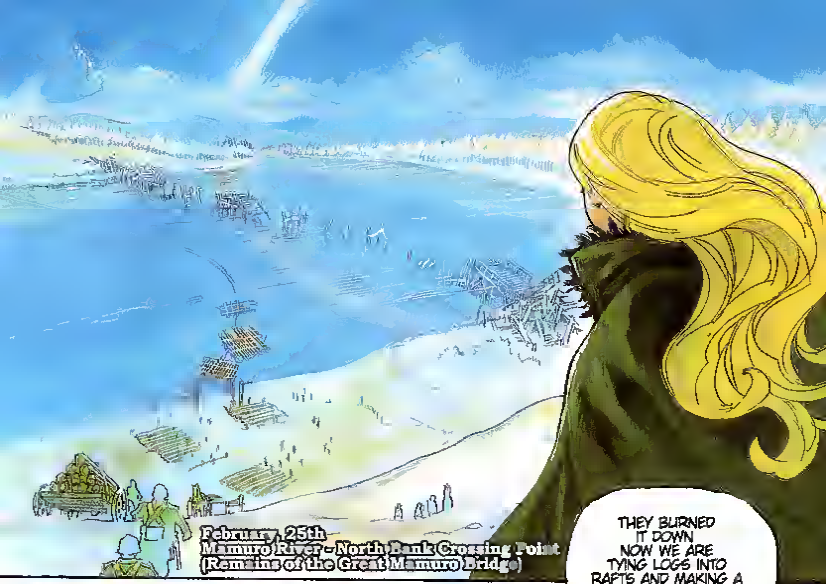
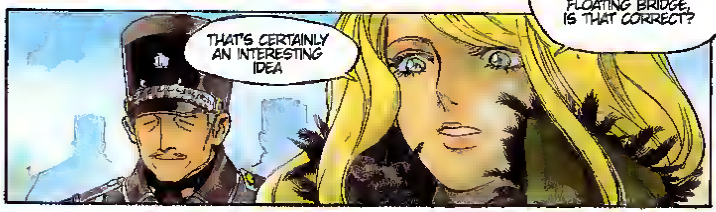
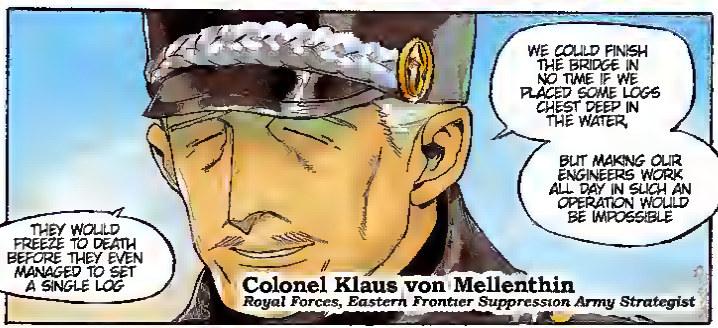
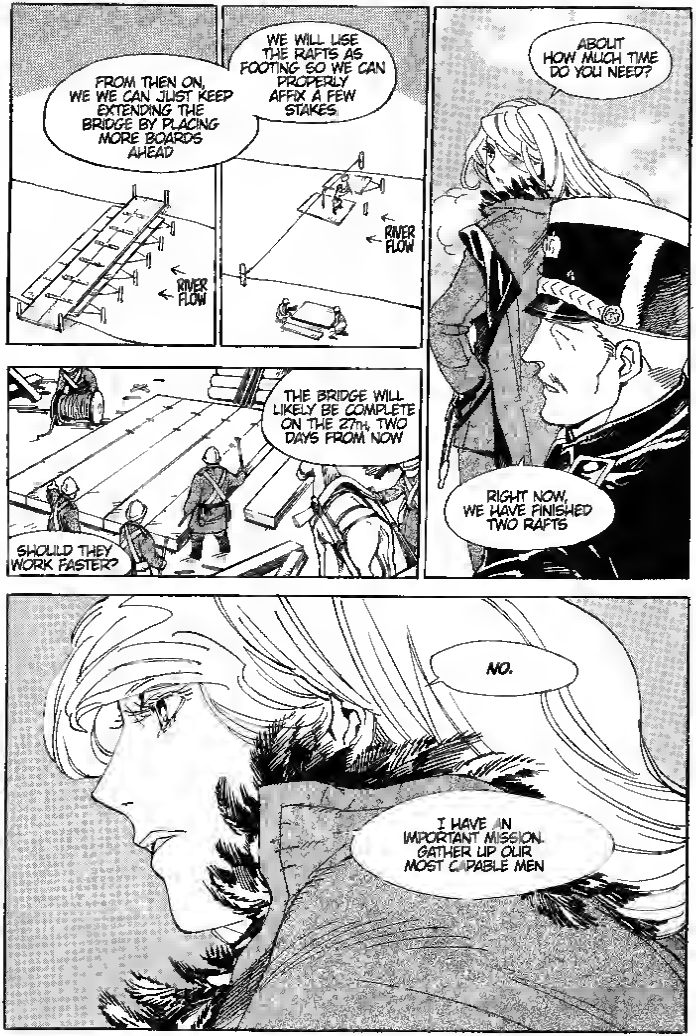

February, 25th
Mamuro River – North Bank Crossing Point
(Remains of the Great Mamuro Bridge)
THEY BURNED IT DOWN NOW WE ARE TYING LOGS INTO RAFTS AND MAKING A FLOATING BRIDGE, IS THAT CORRECT?


THAT'S CERTAINLY AN INTERESTING IDEA

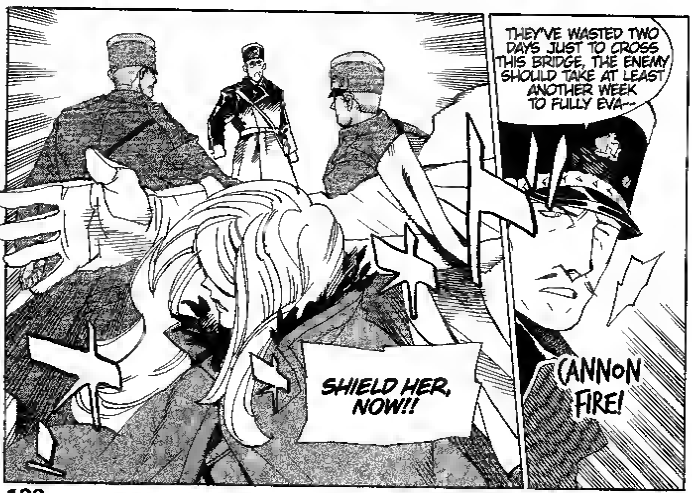

WE COULD FINISH THE BRIDGE IN NO TIME IF WE PLACED SOME LOGS CHEST DEEP IN THE WATER,
BUT MAKING OUR ENGINEERS WORK ALL DAY IN SUCH AN OPERATION WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE
THEY WOULD FREEZE TO DEATH BEFORE THEY EVEN MANAGED TO SET A SINGLE LOG
Colonel Klaus von Mellenthin
Royal Forces, Eastern Frontier Suppression Army Strategist


FROM THEN ON, WE WE CAN JUST KEEP EXTENDING THE BRIDGE BY PLACING MORE BOARDS AHEAD
WE WILL USE THE RAFTS AS FOOTING SO WE CAN PROPERLY AFFIX A FEW STAKES.
RIVER FLOW
RIVER FLOW
ABOUT HOW MUCH TIME DO YOU NEED?
RIGHT NOW, WE HAVE FINISHED TWO RAFTS
THE BRIDGE WILL LIKELY BE COMPLETE ON THE 27th, TWO DAYS FROM NOW
SHOULD THEY WORK FASTER?
NO.
I HAVE AN IMPORTANT MISSION. GATHER UP OUR MOST CAPABLE MEN

YOU SAY THIS WILL TAKE TWO DAYS, BUT CAN'T THIS PERIOD REALLY BE SHORTENED?
BUT THE WAY OUR ENGINEERS ARE DOING IT WILL ALLOW US TO MOVE A VAST NUMBER OF SOLDIERS ONCE IT'S DONE
IT MIGHT LOOK LIKE WE ARE DOING THIS IN A ROUNDABOUT WAY..
WELL, IT MIGHT BE A BIT TOUGH TO THOSE PRONE TO SEA SICKNESS
HOW MANY YEARS HAVE PASSED SINCE YOU NO LONGED NEEDED TO TAKE CARE OF ME?
WAS IT WHEN THE THE VICEROY FAMILY SUCCEEDED THEIR LINE AND YOU BECAMSE AN OFFICER?
KLAUS...
I SEE YOU REALLY HAVE NO INTENTION TO START TAKING THINGS SERIOUSLY

IT WAS ROUGHLY 15 YEARS AGO
WHEN I THINK BACK ON IT, IT DOESN'T FEEL LIKE A SECOND HAS PASSED
WHAT'S THE SITUATION ON THE OTHER SIDE?
AAH, I'M TALKING TOO MUCH AGAIN,
I GUESS I REALLY OUGHT TO WORK ON YOUR REQUEST, PRINCESS
OUR ELITE MUSKETEERS HAVE SPOTTED THREE ENEMY SQUADS CROSSING THE RIVER OUT OF OUR RANGE. NOTHING ELSE FOR NOW
THAT'S MORE THAN 10 LEAGUES, AND THEY CAN KEEP GOING MORE, BUT...

I KNOW...
THE MAYOR OF THAT PORT CITY, MINATSU, WILL REFUSE TO COOPERATE WITH THEIR ARMY,
AFTER ALL, WE HAVE ALREADY PROVIDED MONEY AND ARE ENSURING THEIR SAFETY

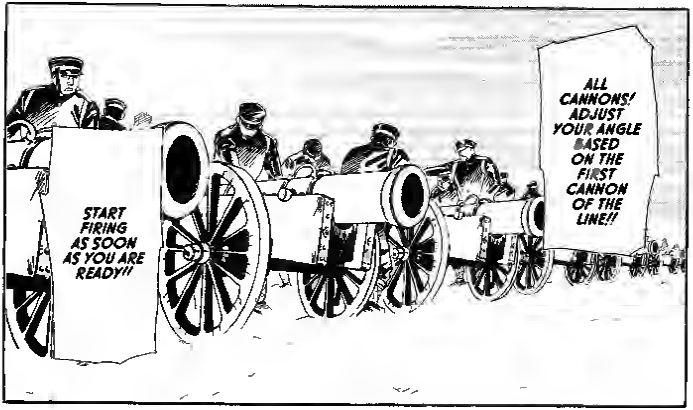

THEY'VE WASTED TWO DAYS JUST TO CROSS THIS BRIDGE, THE ENEMY SHOULD TAKE AT LEAST ANOTHER WEEK TO FULLY EVA---
SHIELD HER, NOW!!
CANNON FIRE!

NO, SURELY NOT
THOSE LEFT BEHIND ARE LIKELY USING MAKESHIFT RIVERBOATS
AND NOW THEY'RE FINALLY CROSSING THE RIVER
TELL ME .
CAN SOLDIERS SWIM IN THESE COLD WATERS?
THIS IS GOOD...
OUR ENEMIES EVEN LEFT SOLDIERS BEHIND, THEY'RE TRULY FALLING APART,
THEY SHOULD HAVE SHIPS READY AT THE PORT CITY AT THE SOUTHERN TIP OF THIS INSLAND
THEY WILL HAVE A HARD TIME WITH THE ROUGH SEAS OF WINTER

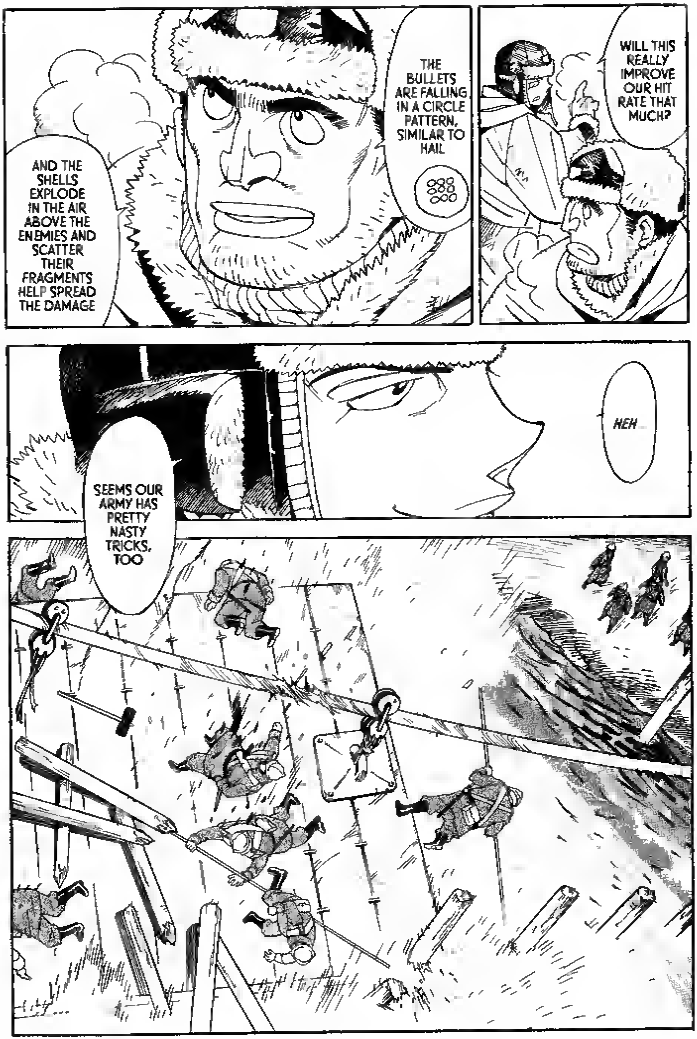
FIRST CANON-EERS! INCREASE THE CANNON ANGLE AND PREPARE A SECOND SHOT!
THE WIND SEEMS TO BE GIVING US TOO MUCH POWER!
THAT WAS HIGHER THAN EXPE-CTED
FIRE THE CAN-NON!
ドン
STILL TOO FAR OFF FROM THE TARGET
THAT NAVY COMMANDER RETURNED IN HALF A DAY AND BROUGHT REINFOR-CEMENTS
HORSES FOR OUR CAVALRY, 2 RIFLEMAN PLATOONS AND ONE ELITE COMPANY,
THESE GUYS WEREN'T LUCKY

IT CAME FROM BEHIND THOSE SOLDIERS, ON THE OTHER COAST
NOT EVEN CLOSE

I'M GETTING IMPATIENT....
JUST TWELVE CANNONS WON'T DESTROY THE ENEMY BRIDGE
BUT EVEN IF WE END UP ONLY DELAYING THEIR OPERATION BY HAVING THE SHELLS HIT ALL AROUND THEIR WORKS, THAT'S FINE
It would be better if we just hit them all before they distanced themselves from the coast,
but does not seem likely
And if we give up our position, we might end up being shot as well,
This could even force us to cross the river
TAR-GET...
SUCCES-FULLY HIT


ALL CANNONS! ADJUST YOUR ANGLE BASED ON THE FIRST CANNON OF THE LINE!!
START FIRING AS SOON AS YOU ARE READY!!

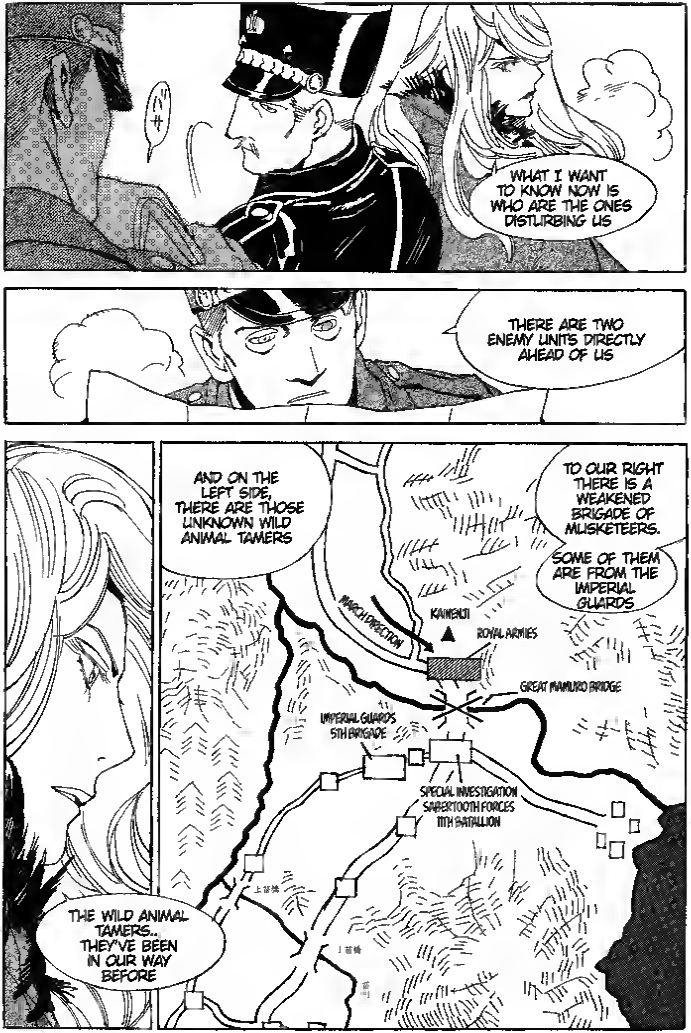
A BATALLION COMMANDER SHOULD BE MORE COMPOSED
IT'S A BIT SHAMEFUL TO GET SO IRRITATED IN FRON OF THE SOLDIERS.
WE SHOULD JUST USE ALL OUR TWELVE CANNONS AT ONCE TO CONFUSE THE HELL OUTTA THEM
DON'T YOU THINK WE'RE BEING TOO CAREFREE USING ONLY ONE CANNON TO ADJUST OUR AIM?
THERE'S NO NEED TO WORRY ABOUT TRIVIAL THINGS LIKE THAT
THIS IS JUST A BIT OF HARASSMENT, YOU SEE
YES!
OUR OBJECTIVE IS TO DISTURB AND CONFUSE THEM


AND THE SHELLS EXPLODE IN THE AIR ABOVE THE ENEMIES AND SCATTER THEIR FRAGMENTS HELP SPREAD THE DAMAGE
THE BULLETS ARE FALLING IN A CIRCLE PATTERN, SIMILAR TO HAIL
WILL THIS REALLY IMPROVE OUR HIT RATE THAT MUCH?
HEH
SEEMS OUR ARMY HAS PRETTY NASTY TRICKS, TOO

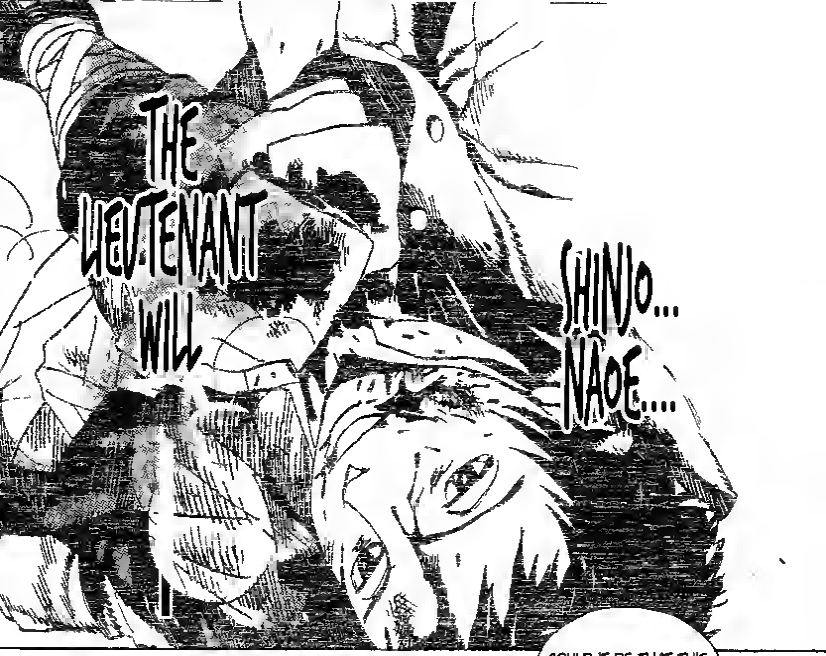
THEIR ATTACK LASTED ABOUT 30 MINUTES. CONTINUE INVESTIGATING THE SITUATION.
HOW MANY CASUALTIES?
AROUND FIFTEEN MEN
THEY MANAGED TO DISRUPT OUR OPERATIONS
HOW VEXING.
THEY CAN'T BE THAT FAR FROM THE AREA THEY WERE SPOTTED EARLIER BY OUR HUNTERS. THE CANNONFIRE SEEMED TO BE DONE FROM A SHORT DISTANCE,
PROBABLY 2 LEAGUES .. THAT'S AROUND THE MAXIMUM RANGE OF THEIR CANNONS
IT SEEMS THE IMPERIALS ARE NOW UNDER COMMAND OF A VERY BRAVE OFFICER

I WANT YOU TO TEACH ME ABOUT IT, KLAUS
SO YOU'RE SAYING I SHOULD SIMPLY ACCEPT THIS?
THIS IS WHAT WAR IS LIKE, PRINCESS
IT IS SAID THAT IT'S IMPORTANT TO VALUE YOUR SOLDIERS,
BUT, SHOWING YOUR ANXIETIES AND WORRIES IS NOT GOOD FOR YOUR BEAUTY
YOU NEED TO GAZE DEEPLY ON THE WHOLE SITUATION
AND...
I KEEP LISTENING TO IT...
THAT FRIVOLOUS TALK OF YOURS

I wonder if not knowing this "reality" would have been a better outcome...
I should not be ashamed of anything...
No...even now, I should act the same way as always
I'VE SUBJUGATED THE LIKES OF THOSE IN THE PAST. THIS IS NOT DIFFERENT FROM A REBELLION
IT CAN BE SAID THAT WE FINALLY ENCOUNTERED THE REALITY OF BATTLE SINCE WE CAME HERE


WHAT I WANT TO KNOW NOW IS WHO ARE THE ONES DISTURBING US
THERE ARE TWO ENEMY UNITS DIRECTLY AHEAD OF US
AND ON THE LEFT SIDE, THERE ARE THOSE UNKNOWN WILD ANIMAL TAMERS
TO OUR RIGHT THERE IS A WEAKENED BRIGADE OF MUSKETEERS.
SOME OF THEM ARE FROM THE IMPERIAL GUARDS
MARCH DIRECTION
KANEKUI
ROYAL ARMIES
GREAT MAMURO BRIDGE
IMPERIAL GUARDS 5TH BRIGADE
SPECIAL INVESTIGATION SABERTOOTH FORCES 11TH BATALLION
THE WILD ANIMAL TAMERS.. THEY'VE BEEN IN OUR WAY BEFORE

THEIR PREVIOUS COMMANDER DIED DURING THE NIGHT ATTACK 5 DAYS AGO,
HIS BODY HAS BEEN SEIZED, SO THERE'S NO MISTAKE
SABERTOOTH TIGERS, RIGHT? SEEING ONE OF THOSE NOWADAYS IS CERTAINLY A PAINFUL EXPERIENCE
THAT'S GREAT
THE MAN WHO MANAGED TO DESTROY THREE BATALLIONS OF OUR ARMY WITH ONLY ONE IS NOW DEAD
300 YEARS AGO, WE WOULD HAVE JUST DESTROYED THEM WITH BOWS AND SPEARS
AND WHAT ABOUT THEIR CURRENT COMMANDER? WHO IS HE?
ACCORDING TO INFORMATION OBTAINED FROM PRISONERS, THEY'RE NOW LED BY A CAPTAIN THAT HAS BEEN PROMOTED IN BATTLE
I DON'T KNOW HIS NAME, BUT...


THE LIEUTENANT WILL
SHINJO... NAOE....

Shinjo....Naoe....?

COULD IT BE THAT THIS COMMANDER IS THE LIEUTENANT HE WAS TALKING ABOUT?
IT DOES SEEM LIKE THE IMPERIAL ARMY HAS A FEW LOW RANKING COMMISSIONED OFFICERS
NOT A HIGH RANKING OFFICER... THAT MORIHARA PERSON WASN'T PARTICULARLY HARD TO HANDLE, HOWEVER....

THEY SEEM TO BE THE KIND OF ARMY WHERE,
THOSE BELOW HAVE TO MAKE UP FOR THE INCOMPETENCE OF THEIR SUPERIORS

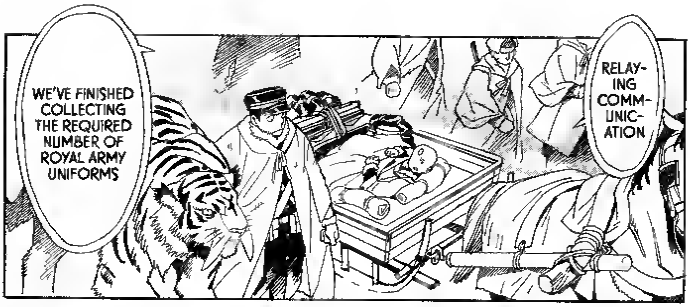
I WILL MAKE CERTAIN
PLEASE ALLOW ME TO HANDLE THIS
THAT THESE "BEAST TAMERS" WILL BE COMPLETELY DESTROYED

I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO IT, ANDREI....
COLONEL BARANOVICH DE LUXER KAMINSKI
Kaminsky is...
A quite capable soldier...
However...

Historically...
Being a lover of those in power will inevitably lead to misfortune...
Getting involved in bloody, political disorder
Besides his ability, he also has fierce ambition...
And also, he faces any danger for his beloved princess and country...
I WILL DESCEND TO THE RIVERBANK
I WANT TO INSPIRE THE SOLDIERS
YES, YOUR EXCELLENCY. ALTHOUGH IT'S DANGEROUS

IF THE ENEMY COMMANDER IS REALLY THAT MAN,
I'VE HEARD HE HAS PLENTY OF GUTS IN BATTLE
CERTAINLY, YOUR EXCELLENCY
SO, THERE'S NO NEED TO BE WORRIED
THERE IS NO DANGER
BY NOW, A MAN LIKE HIM SHOULD HAVE DISAPPEARED AMIDST THE MIST AND DAZE
MAKING ALL THE PREPARATIONS FOR THEIR NEXT MOVE,
AM I WRONG?

IT SHALL BE DONE AS YOU WISH, YOUR EXCELLENCY
PRINCESS OF THE EASTERN FRONTIER!
PRINCESS!!
OOHHH!


WE'VE FINISHED COLLECTING THE REQUIRED NUMBER OF ROYAL ARMY UNIFORMS
RELAY-ING COMM-UNIC-ATION

THANKS FOR YOUR HARD WORK REST A BIT
IN ANY CASE...
WHAT DOES HE PLAN TO DO WITH THOSE?

WHAT IS THIS MAN...
PLANNING?
WELL DONE.

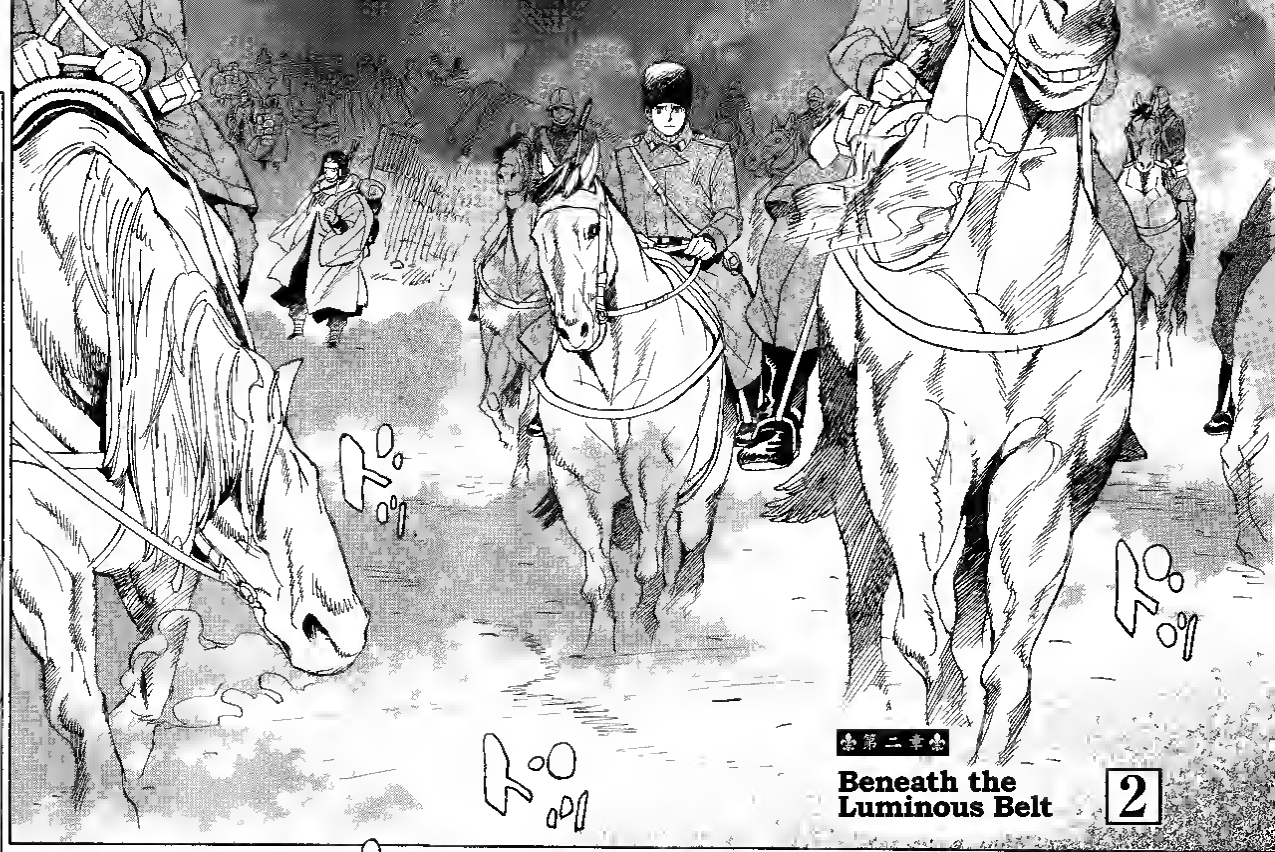
editor **JAC**
translator **DiamondEdge**
cleaner/type **M3OW**

皇國的守護者

WHAT IS IT?
SECOND LIEUT-ENANT?
ER... ARE YOU OKAY?
IF THERE ARE NO OTHER QUESTIONS
LET'S GO

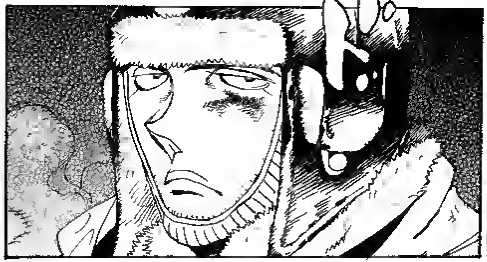
LETTER FROM THE MOBILIZATION SUPPORT SQUAD HEAD-QUARTERS
IT SEEMS LIKE THE EVACUATION OF THE NORTHERN GARRISON IS STILL PROGRESSING SLOWLY

February 17th, 2PM.
47.km south of the
Great Mamuro Bridge



♣第二章♣

Beneath the Luminous Belt 2



SAY WHAT?! HOW MANY MORE DAYS DO WE HAVE TO BUY THEM?
SEVEN DAYS, NOTHING HAS CHANGED,
ONE WAY OR ANOTHER WE WILL MANAGE TO BUY SOME
IS THAT SO? EVEN IF WE ARE WIPED OUT, THEY PROBABLY STILL HAVE ANOTHER BATALLION
THEY ARE PROBABLY JUST DIVERSIONS FROM THE ROYAL ARMY
I WONDER ABOUT THAT MORALE AMONGST THE IMPERIAL GUARD IS DETERIORATING RAPIDLY, A FEW SOLDIERS ARE SIMPLY DESERTING
THEY HAVE ROUGHLY 3,000 MEN, WHILE OUR SIDE HAS JUST AROUND 600 MEN, RIGHT? EVEN A CHILD COULD REALIZE THE POWER DIFFERENCE IS TOO BIG
THEY ARE COMING INTO CONTACT WITH THE ENEMY QUITE OFTEN

IN ANY CASE, I WONDER IF EVERYTHING IS ALL RIGHT, SINCE KANAMORI IS INVOLVED
YOU WANT TO KEEP GOING?!
DON'T YOU HAVE ANY INTENTIONS OF PROTECTING THE PEOPLE?
WE WILL GET A HORSE
AND ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, WE'RE GOING TO MINATSU
THEY'VE RIPPED APART THE PEOPLE FROM THE NORTHERN VILLAGES YOU ABANDONED!
AND THEY STOLE ALL THE RICE SEEDS THAT WERE STORED FOR WHEN SPRING COMES!!

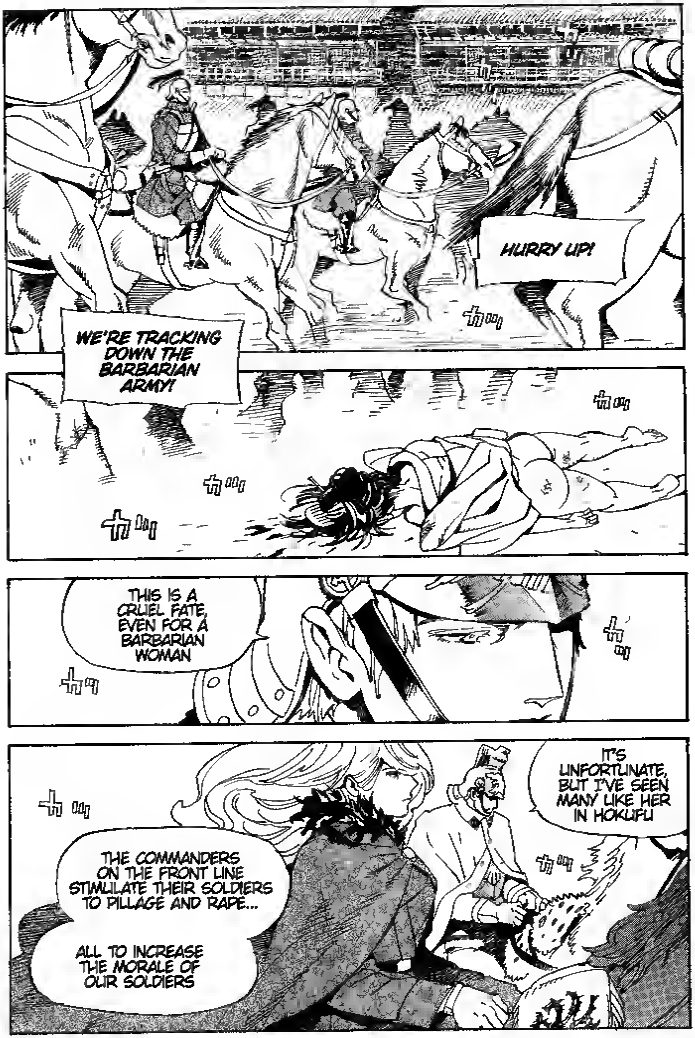
My son tried to defy them and got killed in an instant,
That boy...
That boy...
Died alongside some other people...

I will never forget those four people...

OLD MAN, I DON'T THINK YOU UNDER-STAND THIS
WE'RE ALSO DOING OUR BEST TO HELP OUR ALLIES ESCAPE ALIVE
Ah... but I under-stand per-fectly

IT SOUNDS LIKE THEY REACHED THE VILLAGES NORTH OF MAMURO RIVER
AND THEY PUSHED THEIR WAY THROUGH THE SWAMPS UPSTREAM

When the situation gets really dire,
You military types just care about protecting yourselves...
And you ignore the civilians

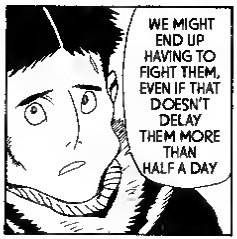

HURRY UP!
WE'RE TRACKING DOWN THE BARBARIAN ARMY!
THIS IS A CRUEL FATE, EVEN FOR A BARBARIAN WOMAN
IT'S UNFORTUNATE, BUT I'VE SEEN MANY LIKE HER IN HOKUFU
THE COMMANDERS ON THE FRONT LINE STIMULATE THEIR SOLDIERS TO PILLAGE AND RAPE...
ALL TO INCREASE THE MORALE OF OUR SOLDIERS

IF THOSE COMMITTING THOSE CRIMES ARE OBEDIENT,
THAT IS ENOUGH
THEY ARE GIVEN PERMISSION TO PILLAGE AND RAPE AS A REWARD FOR THEIR LOYALTY
AND BESIDES, ANDREY,
AT THIS POINT, I CANOT LET OUR COUNTRY'S RULE OR MY COMMAND OVER THE ARMY TO BECOME UNSTABLE
AS YOU WILL.
Does having your country trampled make your chest ache?

HONESTLY, I DON'T THINK WE WILL BE ABLE TO HOLD THEM OFF FOR 7 MORE DAYS, SO THE EVACUATION IS COMPLETE
OR DO ANY OF YOU THINK WE CAN DO IT?
Can you bear all this hatred?
But it would be interesting if you managed to keep your cool.
A beast tamer... he'a probably indeed a composed man
.....
.....
ONCE
THAT'S TRUE
AND THEY COULDN'T DEAL WITH US, DON'T YOU AGREE?
WE MANAGED TO COMPLETE OUR MISSION AND DIRECTLY ENGAGE WITH THE ENEMY

IN THE LAST TWO DAYS, WE'VE CROSSED THE RIVER AHEAD OF THEIR SCOUNTS AHD DEFEATED THEM,
AND WE BOMBARED THEM DURING THE DAY
AND AFTER OBSERVING THE RESULTS, WE COULD DO IT AGAIN DURING THE NIGHT
BUT, EVEN THOUGH WE MANAGED TO HARASS THEM CONSIDERABLY WELL, IN THE END, WE DIDN'T REALLY BUY MUCH MORE THAN HALF A DAY'S WORTH OF MARCHING

THAT IS TO SAY
OUR MORALE IS VERY LOW, BUT WE HAVE NO CHOICE

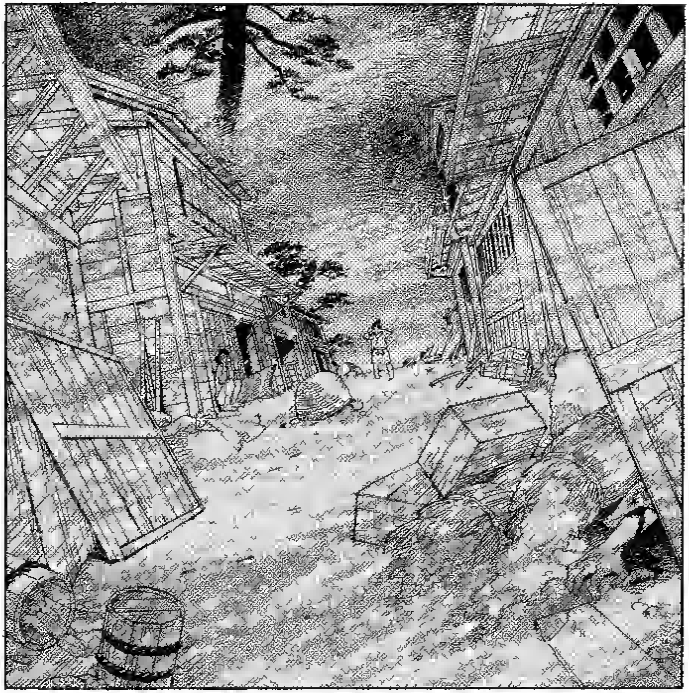

WE MIGHT END UP HAVING TO FIGHT THEM, EVEN IF THAT DOESN'T DELAY THEM MORE THAN HALF A DAY

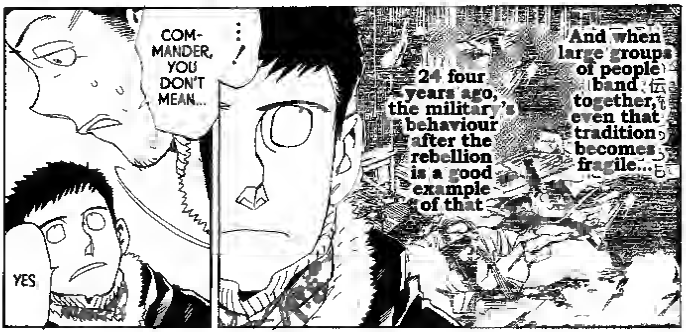
SO, IF WE FIGHT THEM, ALL WE EARN IS JUST 12 HOURS
IN THIS CASE, WE MIGHT JUST RESIGN

CAN YOU OFFER US SOME INTEL ON THE ROYAL ARMY'S MARCHING CAPABILITIES?
YES
YOU'VE CERTAINLY BEEN TAUGHT THIS DURING MILITARY SCHOOL...
2ND LT HYOUDOU,
UNLIKE OUR ARMY, THEY DO NOT REGARD THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SUPPLY TRAIN AND COMMUNICATIONS AS A PRIORITY. THEY VIEW IT AS UNNECESSARY RESTRICTION TO THEIR MOVEMENTS.
COMPARED TO THE SIZE OF THEIR ARMY, THEIR SUPPLY SQUADS ARE VERY SMALL...
INSTEAD, EACH SQUAD IS SUPPOSED TO OBTAIN THE NECESSARY RESOURCES FOR THEMSELVES ON SITE. FUNDAMENTALLY, EACH SQUAD IS SELF-SUFFICIENT,
THEREFORE, THEY ARE VERY AGILE

ROYAL ARMY ROUTE
TENRYOU PLAINS
HONJU
FOR THEM TO HAVE MOVED SO SWIFTLY ACROSS OUR TERRITORIES,
THEY MUST HAVE SEIZED CONTROL OF OUR PROVISIONS STORED IN HOKUFU
IN THAT CASE, ISN'T IT SIMPLE?
WE CAN SLOW THEM DOWN SIMPLY BY PREVENTING THEM FROM OBTAINING FURTHER RESOURCES
BASED ON WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT THE SIZE OF THE ENEMY SUPPLY CHAIN
THEY SHOULD START HAVING PROBLEMS A FEW DAYS AFTER CROSSING MAMURO RIVER
HOWEVER, THEY CAN'T USE OUR RESOURCES,
THERE'S NOTHING LEFT ALL THE WAY TO THE COAST
ARE YOU TIRED?

THEY AREN'T JUST STEALING RESOURCES FROM OUR MILITARY STORAGES
THE SAME THING HAPPENED WITH THOSE VILLAGERS WE MET EARLIER ON THE ROAD
THEY'VE RIPPED APART EVERYONE FROM THE VILLAGE TO THE NORTH
LOCAL FORAGING OUR ARMY IS TRADITIONALLY AGAINST PILLAGING
BUT THAT DOES NOT MEAN THEY SHARE OUR VIEWS



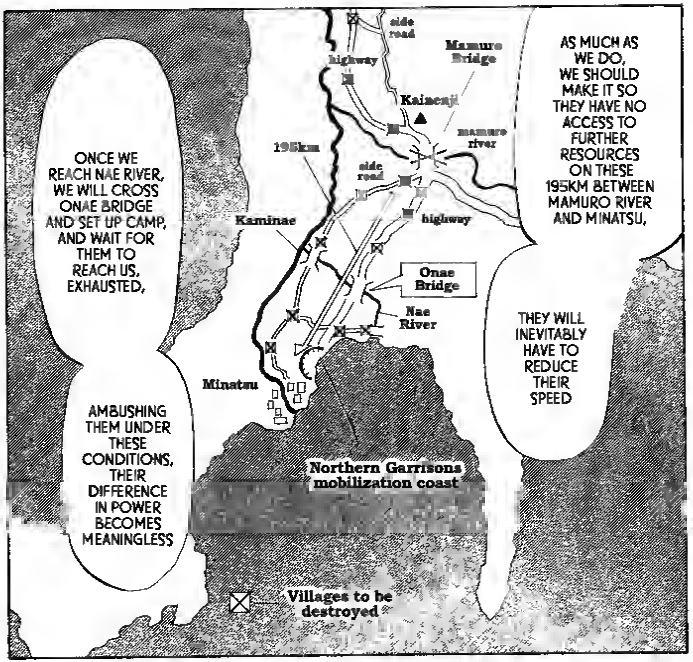

COM-
MANDER,
YOU
DON'T
MEAN...
YES
…!
24 four years ago, the military's behaviour after the rebellion is a good example of that
And when large groups of people band together, even that tradition becomes fragile...

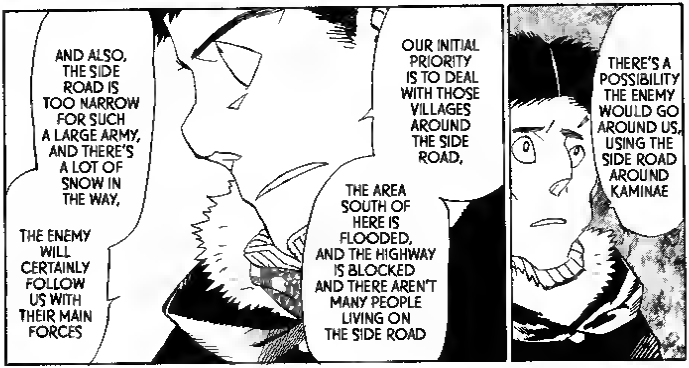
WE WON'T JUST FIGHT THE ENEMY...
WE WILL BURN EVERYTHING STANDING BETWEEN OUR ALLIES AND THE ENEMY TROOPS.
AND WE WILL POISON THE WELLS

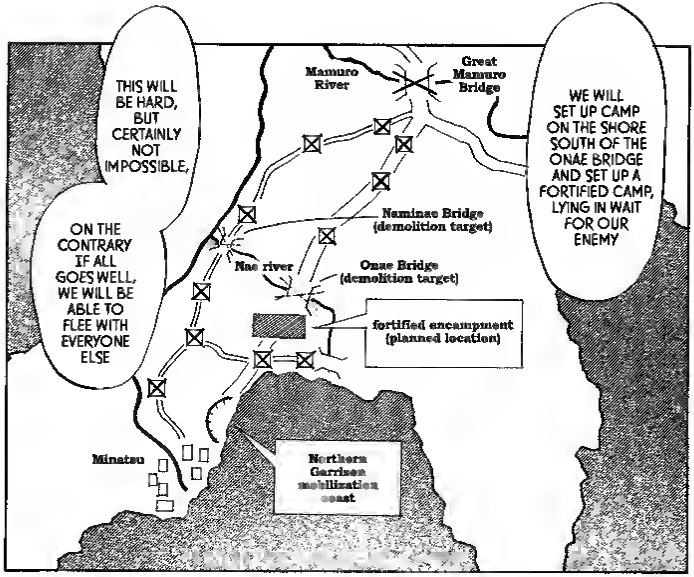
.....
WHAT WILL THE COMMON VILLAGERS DO?
THEY CAN BRING WHATEVER THEY CAN CARRY WITH US TO MINATSU,
THERE IS A LARGE GRANARY OWNED BY THE CITY
IF THE MAYOR REFUSES TO AID US, WE CAN THREATEN TO BURN THE CITY

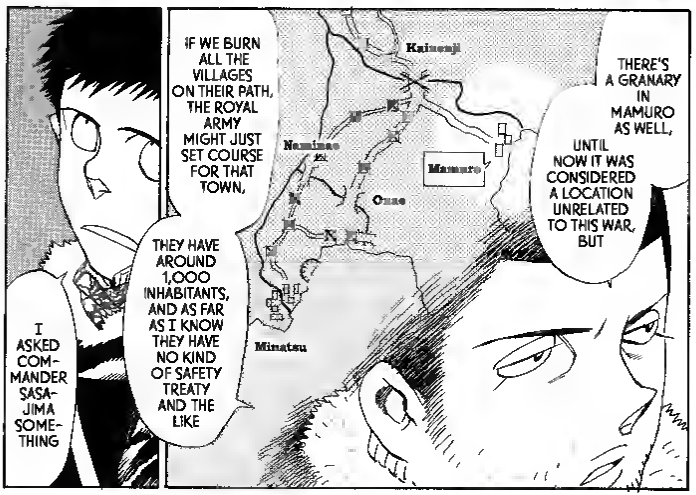
EVEN IF WE CAN ONLY COVER 40KM OR SO A DAY, WE CAN STILL PREVENT THE MAJORITY OF THE VILLAGERS FROM BEING CAPTURED BY THE ENEMY
WE CAN USE THOSE HORSES AND CARRIAGES TO TRANSPORT WOMEN AND CHILDREN, AND THE ADULT MEN CAN SIMPLY WALK
OUR OWN SUPPLIES ARE EXPECTED TO REACH US IN 3 DAYS,
BUT WE DON'T HAVE SUFFICIENT MEANS TO TRANSPORT THE PEOPLE ALL THE WAY THERE
WE WILL MAKE THE ROYAL ARMY COME IN A HECTIC CHASE AFTER US
AND SO, WE WILL BE ABLE TO BUY THE TIME WE NEED OR RATHER.
THEY ARE PARTICULARLY PROUD OF IT... I AM SURE THAT EVEN THE ROYAL ARMY WILL AT THE VERY LEAST UPHOLD THE CODE
WE WILL BE BACKED BY THEM AND CALL UPON THE GRAND CODE,
AND IF WE JUST MAKE THE REFUGEES AND THE MAYOR TALK, I'M SURE THEY WILL REACH AN AGREEMENT AND TAKE CARE OF THE REST
MINATSU HAS OVER 2,000 INHABITANTS, AND ALL OF THEM FAITHFULLY FOLLOW THE GRAND CODE,

THERE'S NO GUARANTEE OF THAT HOKUFU WAS PILLAGED!
THAT CITY NOT ONLY HAD A GRANARY, BUT ALSO PLENTY OF MILITARY RESOURCES,
AND THEY HAD NO REASON OR ARMY TO STOP THEM FROM DOING WHATEVER THEY WANTED
HEY,
I'M ASKING YOU TO TRUST ME FROM NOW ON
OR DO YOU WANT ME TO KEEP LECTURING ON ABOUT THE GRAND CODE?
NO.
IN THAT CASE,
ALL IS DECIDED,
WE WILL CONVINCE THE CITIZENS TO FLEE WITH US
AND THEN WE WILL BURN EVERYTHING
DO YOU FOLLOW ME UNTIL THIS POINT?


side road
highway
Mamuro Bridge
Kaimenji
mamuro river
195km
side road
highway
Kaminae
Onae Bridge
Nae River
Minatsu
Northern Garrisons mobilization coast
Villages to be destroyed
ONCE WE REACH NAE RIVER, WE WILL CROSS ONAE BRIDGE AND SET UP CAMP, AND WAIT FOR THEM TO REACH US, EXHAUSTED,
AMBUSHING THEM UNDER THESE CONDITIONS, THEIR DIFFERENCE IN POWER BECOMES MEANINGLESS
AS MUCH AS WE DO, WE SHOULD MAKE IT SO THEY HAVE NO ACCESS TO FURTHER RESOURCES ON THESE 195KM BETWEEN MAMURO RIVER AND MINATSU,
THEY WILL INEVITABLY HAVE TO REDUCE THEIR SPEED


AND ALSO, THE SIDE ROAD IS TOO NARROW FOR SUCH A LARGE ARMY, AND THERE'S A LOT OF SNOW IN THE WAY,
THE ENEMY WILL CERTAINLY FOLLOW US WITH THEIR MAIN FORCES
OUR INITIAL PRIORITY IS TO DEAL WITH THOSE VILLAGES AROUND THE SIDE ROAD,
THE AREA SOUTH OF HERE IS FLOODED, AND THE HIGHWAY IS BLOCKED AND THERE AREN'T MANY PEOPLE LIVING ON THE SIDE ROAD
THERE'S A POSSIBILITY THE ENEMY WOULD GO AROUND US, USING THE SIDE ROAD AROUND KAMINAE


THIS WILL BE HARD, BUT CERTAINLY NOT IMPOSSIBLE,
ON THE CONTRARY IF ALL GOES WELL, WE WILL BE ABLE TO FLEE WITH EVERYONE ELSE
Mamuro River
Great Mamuro Bridge
WE WILL SET UP CAMP ON THE SHORE SOUTH OF THE ONAE BRIDGE AND SET UP A FORTIFIED CAMP, LYING IN WAIT FOR OUR ENEMY
Naminae Bridge (demolition target)
Nae river
Onae Bridge (demolition target)
fortified encampment (planned location)
Minatsu
Northern Garrison mobilization coast


I ASKED COM-MANDER SASA-JIMA SOME-THING
THEY HAVE AROUND 1,000 INHABITANTS, AND AS FAR AS I KNOW THEY HAVE NO KIND OF SAFETY TREATY AND THE LIKE
IF WE BURN ALL THE VILLAGES ON THEIR PATH, THE ROYAL ARMY MIGHT JUST SET COURSE FOR THAT TOWN,
Kaisenji
Naminae
Mamuro
Onae
Minatsu
THERE'S A GRANARY IN MAMURO AS WELL,
UNTIL NOW IT WAS CONSIDERED A LOCATION UNRELATED TO THIS WAR, BUT

BEFORE THE ENEMY CAN DO ANYTHING, WE'LL USE A CRUISER TO BOMBARD THE GRANARY IN MAMURO
OBVIOUSLY, IT WILL CARRY THE IMPERIAL BANNER
BUT WE'RE ALREADY BURNING VILLAGES! THE PEOPLE WILL LOSE THEIR FAITH IN US!!
AND THAT'S WHY WE'RE TELLING EVERYONE TO DO THEIR BEST WHILE IMPER-SONATING THE ENEMY
WE WERE ONLY ABLE TO GATHER 20 FULL SETS...
THAT'S FULL UNIF-ORM AND WEAP-ONS

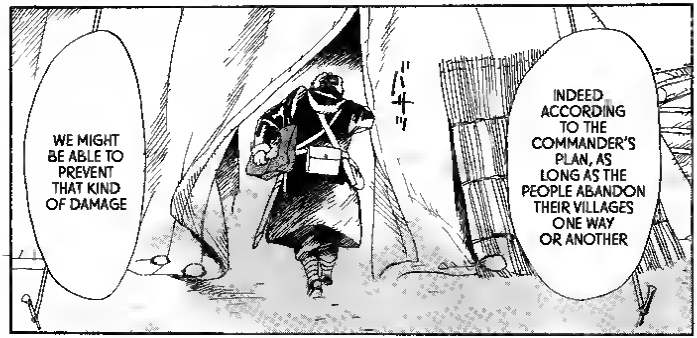
USE THOSE ROYAL ARMY UNIFORMS AND ATTACK THE VILLAGE IN A FEW NIGHTS
OBVIOUSLY, THEY WON'T KILL ANYONE,
THE FOLLOWING MORNING, THEY SHOULD CHANGE CLOTHES, MEET THE VILLAGER CHIEF AND SAY "THE ROYAL ARMY IS APPROACHING, SO PLEASE FLEE THIS PLACE"
RUMORS OF THE ATTACK WILL SPREAD ALONG THE ROADS, AND EVERYONE WILL RUN SOUTH,
WE WILL JUST BURN ABANDONED VILLAGES AND KEEP MOVING FORWARD
THIS IS THE PLAN I DECIDED TO FOLLOW AS COMMANDER OF THIS BATALLION
This is dirty...
WE COME FROM VILLAGES LIKE THOSE AREN'T WE SUPPOSED TO BE FIGHTING FOR THEM?

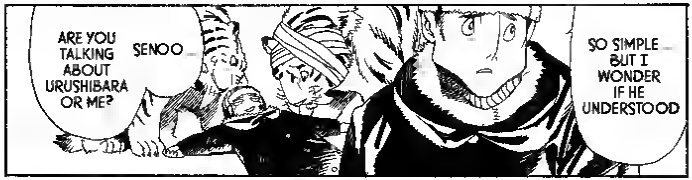
TELL ME, DO YOU WANT US ALL TO SIMPLY HOLD ON TO OUR MORALS AND FIGHT BRAVELY?
IN HALF A DAY, WE WOULD ALL DIE IN BATTLE,
I, AT THE VERY LEAST, REFUSE TO DO THAT
DYING MEANINGLESSLY IN DEFENSE OF OUR COUNTRY OR LIVING ON AS WEAK, UNDERHANDED WARRIORS... IN ANY CASE...
NO, WE DIDN'T TELL THEM
IF I'M GOING TO HELL,
I WANT TO DECIDE WHEN AT THE VERY LEAST
I DON'T THINK HIS HIGHNESS THE PRINCE'S SQUAD WOULD KEEP THIS A SECRET,
ESPECIALLY SINCE HE IS VERY KIND TO THE PEOPLE
ARE THEY INVOLVED IN THIS AS WELL?
WHAT YOU PLAN TO DO ABOUT THE IMPERIAL GUARDS?

THIS MIGHT ALSO CONSIDERABLY DECREASE THEIR MORALE AND MAKE THEM RETREAT IN A HURRY
AND THIS WILL HELP SPREAD THE INFORMATION ABOUT IT ALL, AS THEY WILL BELIEVE OUR FAKE ATTACK WAS INDEED REAL
RATHER, I WANT TO INDUCE THEM INTO HELPING THE PEOPLE.
ULTIMATELY, WE WILL BE SEEN AS HEROES, WHO SOLELY HELD OUR GROUND IN THIS LOSING BATTLE
THIS IS FUN!
AS A SOLDIER, THERE'S NO BIGGER HONOR THAN THIS

This man has such an unpleasant grin
SECOND LIEUTENANT URUSHIBARA I ENTRUST THE FAKE ATTACKS TO YOU
THE PLAN WILL BE CARRIED OUT TONIGHT
YOU MUST ATTACK 2 VILLAGES BY TOMORROW.
BY 3PM, DROP THE ROYAL ARMY CAP OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT ON THE SITE AFTEWARDS
REUNITE WITH OUR MAIN FORCES BY 5PM. ALL COMISSIONED OFFICERS SHOULD BE PRESENT WHEN WE MEET THE VILLAGE CHIEFS
THAT MAN I THOUGH HE WAS CLOSER TO THE PEOPLE
BUT HE ONLY SEES THIS AS A COMM-ANDER
DECEIVING AND BURNING ALL THOSE VILLAGES WILL LIKELY BE COMPLETELY COVERED IN SNOW FOR MANY YEARS

"OH, MY FILTHY BROTHER! SAVE ME!"
BUT NO USE, YOU ALREADY DIED IN BATTLE
YOU SAW THAT FATHER AND CHILD A WHILE AGO
URU-SHI-BARA,
HOW OLD IS YOUR SISTER, BACK AT THE CAPITAL?
ALREADY STAINED WITH THE DIRTY FINGERS OF A ROYAL SOLDIER. UNLESS SOMEONE INTERVENES, SHE MIGHT EVEN BECOME PREGNANT
MAYBE THEY EVEN HAVE SOME UNKOWN WAY TO MA---
!


WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO PREVENT THAT KIND OF DAMAGE
INDEED ACCORDING TO THE COMMANDER'S PLAN, AS LONG AS THE PEOPLE ABANDON THEIR VILLAGES ONE WAY OR ANOTHER

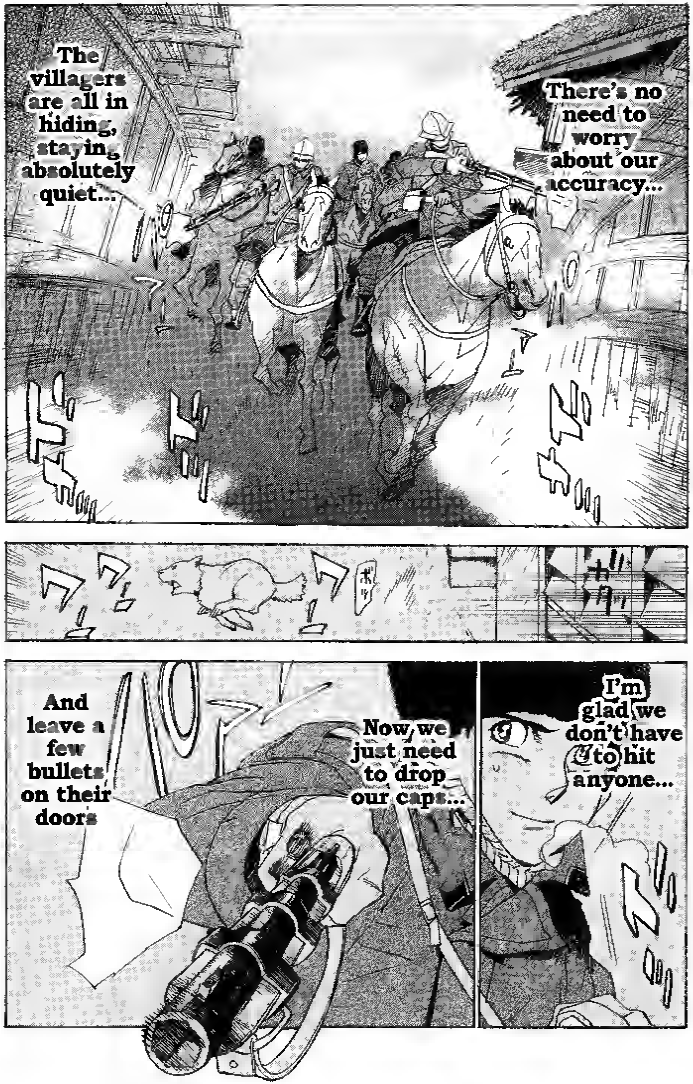

ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT URUSHIBARA OR ME?
SENOO...
SO SIMPLE... BUT I WONDER IF HE UNDERSTOOD

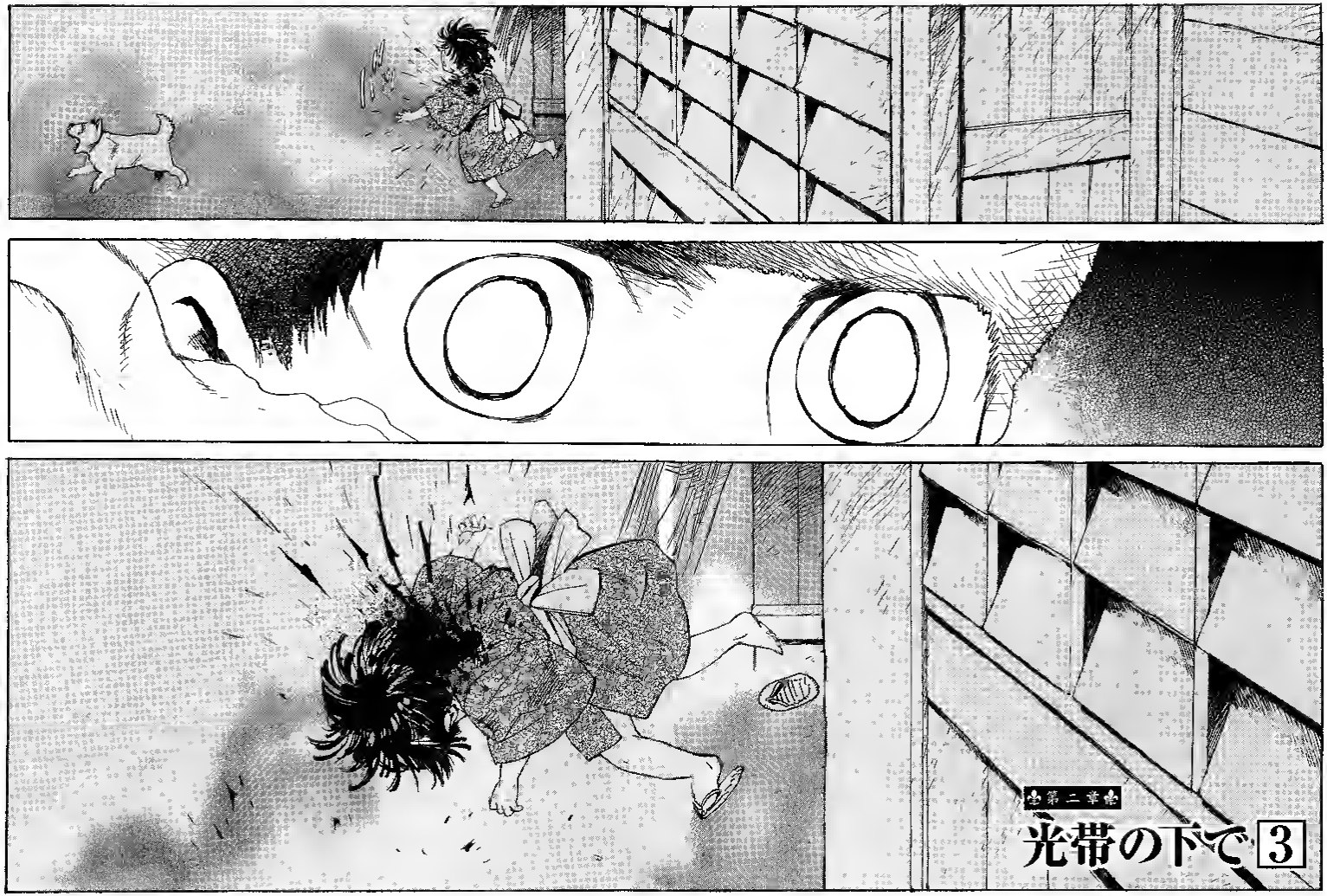
That's exactly it
A devil during the night, and an angel in the morning?

YOU HAVE A GREAT OPPORTUNITY IN YOUR HANDS
IT'S RARE TO BE ABLE TO PERFORM AS BOTH AT ONCE
You can resent me if that makes you feel at ease...
Well, is there anything else you want to confirm?
No?
Very well. You may begin the operation
HURRY UP
AFTER ALL,
WE ARE AT WAR.

editor **JAC**
translator **DiamondEdge**
cleaner/type **M3OW**

皇国の守護者


The villagers are all in hiding, staying absolutely quiet...
There's no need to worry about our accuracy...
And leave a few bullets on their doors
Now, we just need to drop our caps...
I'm glad we don't have to hit anyone...


第二章
光帯の下で 3

February 14th, 4AM.
North Minatsu Beach,
Northern Garrisson Mobilization Coast
ARE YOU SAYING THE ARMY IS GONNA BURN VILLAGES AND WE ARE SUPPOSED TO HELP WITH A BOMBARDMENT?
I UNDERSTAND IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE PLAN
WE CAN'T SACRIFICE CIVILIANS.
WHAT SHOULD WE DO? WE'RE TALKING ABOUT THE NAVY'S OWN FAMILY HERE
WE WON'T GO.
Tsubota Norifumi,
Commander of the Oose Cruiser

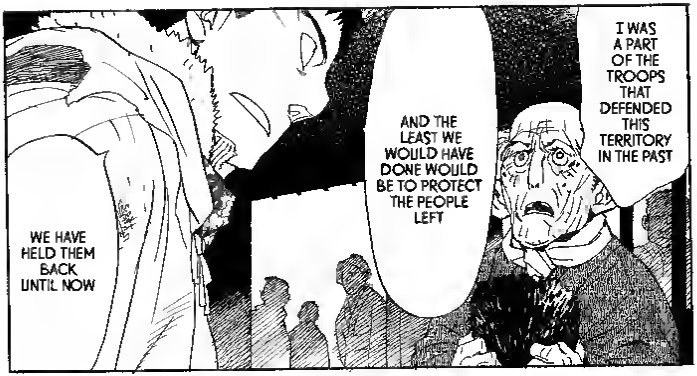
I MADE A PROMISE
"IN FOR A PENNY, IN FOR A POUND" IS HOW THEY SAY IT RIGHT?
WE WILL ALSO EVACUATE THE VILLAGERS FIRST
WHEN THEY START STARVING FOR MILITARY RESOURCES, OUR ENEMIES WILL LIKELY SET THEIR EYES TOWARD'S MAMURO WE HAVE TO DESTROY THE GRANARY IN THAT TOWN
SETTLEMENTS TO BE DESTROYED
BRIDGES TO BE DESTROYED
KAWAGUCHI
GREAT MAMURO BRIDGE
MAMURO RIVER
KAWANAE
ONAE
MAMURO
MINATSU
"OOSE" PLANNED ROUTE
IF THOSE GUYS BURN ALL VILLAGES IN THE PATH OF THE ROYAL ARMY, OUR ENEMIES WON'T BE ABLE TO OBTAIN SUPPLIES AND THEY WILL HAVE TO SLOW DOWN
THIS MAN IS BEING A HYPOCRITE
I DON'T LIKE THIS

THAT'S THE REACTION MOST PEOPLE HAVE WHEN THEY TALK ABOUT HIM, DESPITE NOT KNOWING MUCH ABOUT HIM
THAT'S THE KIND OF FACE THEY MAKE
IS THERE ANY-THING WE CAN DO?
FOR YOU OR YOUR GRANDSON?
二月十八日 午前第六刻半
HEY, JEY... SOLDIER
I APPRECIATE THE OFFER

THIS CHILD KANA NAEKI SHE JUST TURNED FIVE THIS YEAR
SHE HAD QUITE A REPUTATION IN THE VILLAGE
SHE WAS A DOCILE, GENTLE GIRL
AND SHE WAS LOVED BY ALL THE ANIMALS
AT LEAST YOU COULD HELP BURY HER
HER PUPPY WAS SURPRISED BY THE SOUNDS OF THE HORSES AND STARTED RUNNING AROUND SHE FOLLOWED IT, AND THEN SHE

KANA WAS MY GRAND-DAUGHTER...
SHE SUFFERED A PREMATURE DEATH
NOW I ONLY HAVE LEFT A SINGLE DAUGHTER AND A GRANDCHILD
BESIDE HER BODY, WE HAVE FOUND THIS FUR CAP...
LEFT BEHIND IN THE GROUND

I WILL MAKE SURE OF THAT
AVENGE HER.
WE'D LIKE TO INFORM THE VILLAGE CHIEF THAT WE ARE BEGINNING AN EVACUATION OPERATION
WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT?
HOWEVER, AT THE MOMENT, I WORRY ABOUT THE VILLAGE
ざわ
ざわ
UNDER THE CURRENT CIRCUM-STANCES, WE ARE UNABLE TO PROTECT THIS VILLAGE
THIS IS DEPLO-RABLE!
IN MY YOUTH...


I WAS A PART OF THE TROOPS THAT DEFENDED THIS TERRITORY IN THE PAST
AND THE LEAST WE WOULD HAVE DONE WOULD BE TO PROTECT THE PEOPLE LEFT
WE HAVE HELD THEM BACK UNTIL NOW

I'VE ALREADY SENT A MESSAGE TO THEIR MAYOR TO AID US AND ACCEPT YOU AS REFUGEES
I WANT US TO DEPART SOUTH AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TO MINATSU,
CLOTHERS, FOOD, POTTERY, FARMING TOOL AND SEEDS, AS MUCH AS YOU CAN CARRY
I WANT EVERYONE TO GATHER THEIR BELONGINGS AT ONCE,

THANKS TO THE GRAND CODE, EVERYONE WILL BE SAVED
WE JUST NEED TO KEEP GOING UNTIL WE REACH THERE IT'S ALL THAT I ASK
MINATSU IS 196KM AWAY,

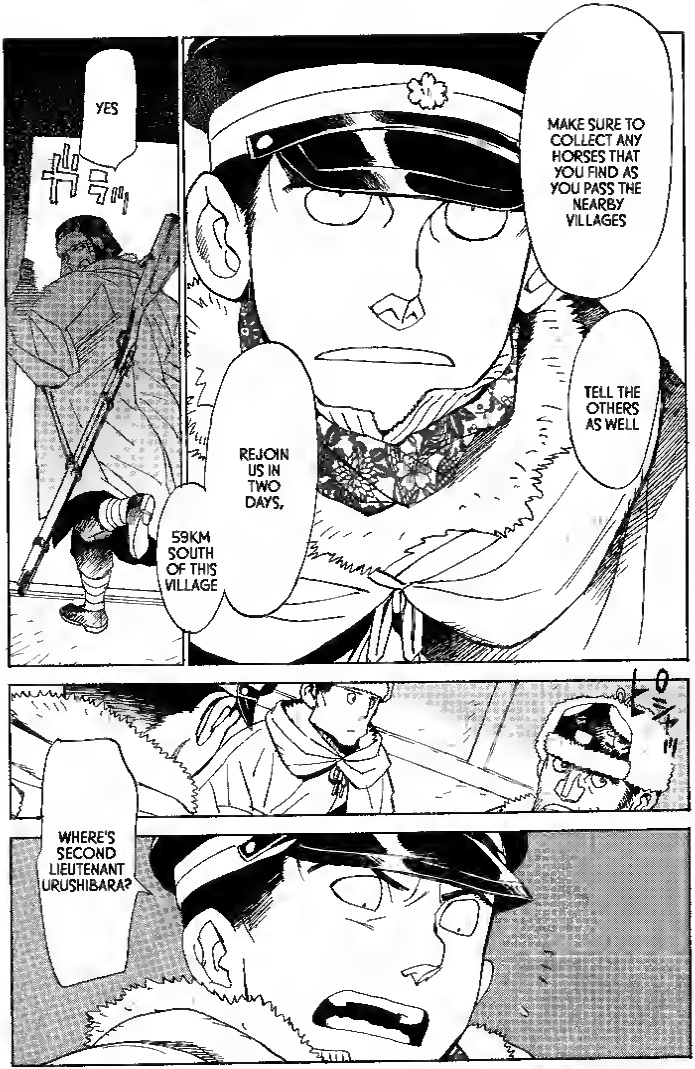
IF WE TAKE TOO LONG, NEXT TIME
EVERYONE COULD END UP BRING KILLED
YOU WANT US TO COVER ALL THAT DISTANCE AND BRING OUR BELONGINGS... OUR WOMEN, CHILDREN AND ELDERLY TOO?
WE WILL LEND YOU FOUR CARRIAGES, THOSE WHO CAN'T WALK CAN ALSO RIDE THOSE
AHH, THAT'S RIGHT WE ALSO WANT TO CONVEY THIS TO ALL THE VILLAGES ALONGSIDE THE HIGHWAY
I DO ASK THAT YOU HURRY UP
OUR SOLDIERS WILL HELP
OF COURSE, WE'RE HELPING WITH THE FUNERAL OF THAT KID BEFORE ANY OF THAT

TSUBOTA
CAN YOU SEE THIS?
IF THE ROYAL ARMY CAN KEEP UP THEIR PACE...
THEY WILL RAIN DOWN ON THESE PEOPLE BEFORE THE MAJORITY OF THEM CAN RIDE OUR SHIPS
WHAT WILL YOU DO IF THAT HAPPENS?
IF OUR FORCES CAN'T GET INLAND THEN
THE ARMY...
WHAT WILL BECOME OF IT?

WE CAN EAT THE POISONED FOOD ON OUR PLATE AND SURVIVE,
OR WE CAN DO NOTHING AND DIE
THE CHOICE SHOULD BE CLEAR HERE. DON'T YOU AGREE?
BUT ABOUT THIS 'SCORCHED EARTH' OPERATION YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT...
WE CANNOT SPEAK OF THIS PLAN AGAIN
9 IN 10 VILLAGES MAY BE LEFT BEHIND TO DIE...
BUT NOT THAT MAN.....
WELL THEN, TSUBOTA!

TO MAM-URO!
IT SEEMS THE "OOSE" IS GOING, THEN...
I WILL DO IT TO UPHOLD THE PROMISE YOU MADE, SASAJIMA SADANOBU
AND MY WIFE IS ENOUGH FOR ME
HOW LOV-ELY
I WILL ALSO GET SOME DRINKS AND A GEISHA, HOW'S THAT?
I DON'T DRINK
ONCE WE GET BACK TO THE CAPITAL, I WILL GIVE YOU THE FINEST SOUTHERN CIGARRETES
...I WILL DO IT...

WELL DONE
AS THINGS ARE GOING, EVERY VILLAGE IN THIS AREA SHOULD BE EVACUATED
SECOND LIEUTENANT HYOUDO TAKE 10 MEN WITH YOU AND GO AHEAD, LOOKING PANICKED
THIS SHOULD MAKE EVERYTHING MORE BELIAVABLE AND PEOPLE SHOULD BE EVEN MORE WILLING TO RUN AWAY


YES
ザッ
MAKE SURE TO COLLECT ANY HORSES THAT YOU FIND AS YOU PASS THE NEARBY VILLAGES
TELL THE OTHERS AS WELL
REJOIN US IN TWO DAYS,
59KM SOUTH OF THIS VILLAGE
ハッ
WHERE'S SECOND LIEUTENANT URUSHIBARA?

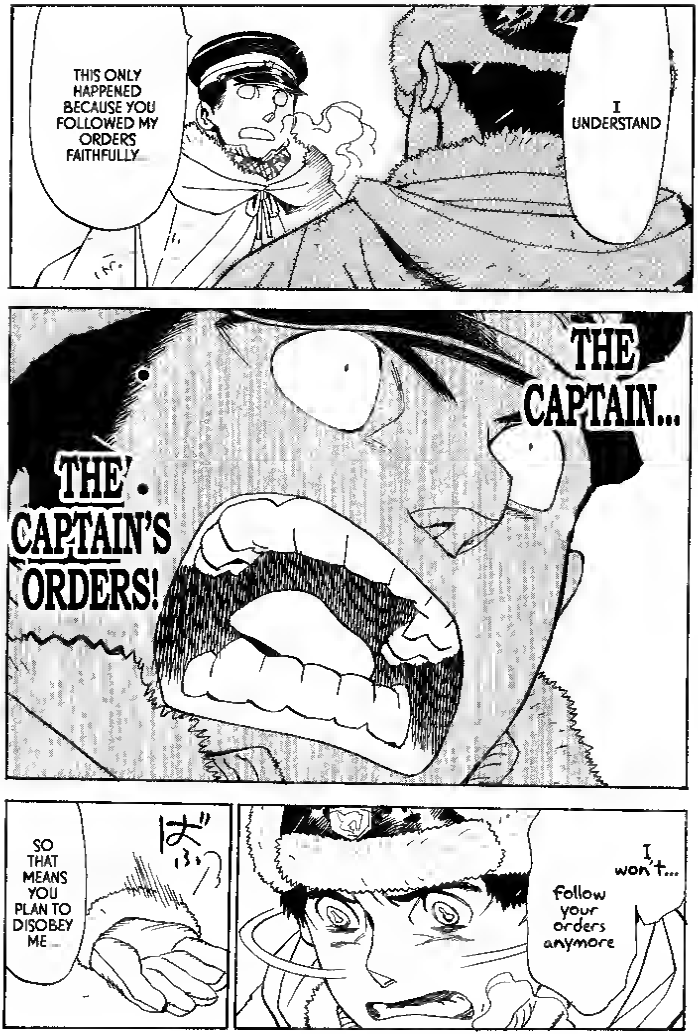
I WILL CALL HIM MYSELF
YOU SEE, HE--
WELL,
I WILL GO,
I HAVE AN IDEA WHERE HE IS

STAND UP, 2ND LIEUT-ENANT
RIGHT NOW I DO NOT HAVE THE TIME TO DEAL WITH YOU IN THIS CONDITION
I NEVER...
NEVER REALLY TOUGHT I'D HIT SOMEONE
SHE WAS A KID...
SHE WAS JUST A KID!
I KNOW THAT
WE ALREADY IDENTIFIED THE CORPSE AND BURIED HER.
I AM SURE YOU UNDERSTAND ALL THAT
RETURN TO YOUR DUTIES AT ONCE

In response, Urushibara straightened his body.

KILL A CHILD!!
YOU MADE ME...
THIS IS YOUR FAULT!
THAT'S JUST YOUR OPNION

WHAT AN IDIOT
COM-MANDER!
HE DOESN'T EVEN UNDERSTAND THE BASICS OF BEING A SOLDIER
BUT HE'S AN IDIOT, A COMPLETE FOOL
YOU DON'T LIKE WHAT I'M SAYING, SERGEANT MAJOR? WELL, IT DOESN'T REALLY MATTER
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
YOU WERE THERE AS WELL
EVER SINCE EARLY IN SCHOOL, I STUDIED AND REVISED IT AS MUCH AS I COULD
DID YOU FORGET IT, TOO?


THIS ONLY HAPPENED BECAUSE YOU FOLLOWED MY ORDERS FAITHFULLY
I UNDERSTAND
THE CAPTAIN...
THE CAPTAIN'S ORDERS!
SO THAT MEANS YOU PLAN TO DISOBEY ME
I won't... follow your orders anymore

So you won't allow anyone to carry burdens they can't shoulder, even when they should?
That's a strange way to try and take all the blame...

AND PERHAPS YOURSELF, AS WELL
NO... YOU MAY BE JUST TRYING TO HELP HIM GROW AS A PERSON

BURN EVERYTHING LEFT HERE
READY YOUR TORCHES
ALL THE VILLAGERS LEFT PRECISELY ONE HOUR AGO,

The first person to set the fire was Second Lieutenant Urushibara.

2nd Lt.!
Please calm down!
2nd Lt.!
MY ORDERS?
A CHILD?
COMMANDER

And thus, everyone followed his orders to the end
I'M THE ONE WHO STARTED THIS FOOLISH PLAN...
The poison...
CHIHAYA...
CAN I STOP NOW? I HAVE TO KEEP GOING FORWARD...
WE'RE ALL LUMPED TOGETHER IN THIS
Was thrown in the wells...
By Captain Shinjo Naoe himself....

Imperial Guards Volume 2 - End.

THE ONES WHO HAVE TO TAKE ALL RESPONSIBILITY FOR ANY ACTIONS DONE BY THE ARMY ARE THOSE WHO ORDERED THEM,
THAT BURDEN IS THEIRS ALONE
THIS BURDEN SHOULD NEVER BE CARRIED BY THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN ORDERED
Right now, he can't be fully honest with himself in front of the others...
He just keeps that ruthless facade...
What about a child?
It seems he's a scout.

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